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THE

ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

MARCH COMMENTARY

THE last occasion on which a General Election in this country took place in the month of February was in the year 1874. The issues that confronted the electorate were very largely domestic in character, and there was no special inducement for the ordinary voter to look outside the British Isles. Yet the Parliament which emerged from this contest found itself compelled to spend a very great deal of its time in devising means to prevent Russia from controlling the Eastern Mediterranean and from becoming mistress of Central Asia; once, indeed, during its lifetime Great Britain and Russia were on the verge of war. *Absit omen.*

Elsewhere in this number Major-General Fuller considers what may be termed the strategy of the present international situation, and he suggests what must be done if the balance between Russia and the West is to be restored. In this place it is proposed rather to recall what has happened during the past twelve months, and against this background to estimate what may happen. The danger to-day is that the ordinary citizen is far too inclined to regard events abroad as a series of isolated incidents, which taken by themselves do not concern him very much, and nobody goes to the trouble of correlating them for him.

In the past this task was undertaken by the Press and the political leaders, but both have long since abdicated their functions. With few exceptions the present newspaper gives prominence on grounds of sensation rather than of importance to any developments abroad—or at home either for that matter—while the political leaders have little to contribute in the way of enlightenment. Time was, in the days of Sir Edward Grey and Sir Austen Chamberlain, when the country could turn to the Foreign Secretary for guidance, but he would indeed be an optimist who in such a spirit would look to Mr. Bevin, a man whose performance at the Foreign Office has rarely risen above mediocrity, but which has generally failed to attain it.

The result is that the man-in-the-street, not to mention the ordinary Member of Parliament, is continually being surprised by developments against which his ancestors would have been warned. Those who have just emerged triumphant from the polls will be lucky if they escape a similar fate, and the probability is that they will not escape it.

DURING the past few months the centre of gravity has shifted from Europe to Asia, where Russia is in process of calling a new world into existence to redress in her favour the balance of the old. Circumstances have favoured her to an extent which would have seemed inconceivable only ten years ago.

In the first place Great Britain and the United States, at no cost to Russia, eliminated Japan, who had been her great rival in the Far East for upwards of half a century, and so

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enabled her to regain the position which she had forfeited after her defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Nor was this all, for hardly had the Second World War come to an end than it became clear that the Colonial Powers, namely Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands, no longer possessed the strength, even if they had the will, to re-assert the authority in Asia which had been theirs for so long. The effort of defeating Germany, Italy, and Japan apparently had been too much for them, and they found themselves so exhausted that they were unable to reap the fruits of their victory.

To find a parallel—and no reassuring one at that—for such a situation it is necessary to go back to the sixth century, when the long war between Rome and Persia left both Powers so weak that they were unable to make head against the new revolutionary force of Islam, which soon destroyed the Persian monarchy altogether and deprived the Caesars of some of their fairest provinces. For "Islam" read "Communism", and the picture seems strangely familiar.

So the Japanese have been driven from the mainland of China, from the island of Formosa, and from the peninsula of Korea; the British have withdrawn from Burma and India; and the Dutch have been persuaded or coerced by London and Washington into according virtual independence to Indonesia. All these events coincide with the interests of Russia, and the achievement of many of them has been the object of her policy for nearly a century. Now she has obtained her end without any expenditure of effort on her own part. Only in the South-East, in Viet Nam and in Malaya, is the Communist advance being held, and there is every indication that Moscow is devoting increasing attention to developments in that area with a view to removing the existing obstacles in the path of Communism.

IT will be well to look closely into the situation in this part of Asia. The new state of Viet Nam comprises the five states of Tong-King, Annam, Laos, Cambodia, and Cochin China, of which the first four were French protectorates and the last was a French colony; before the Second World War they were generally referred to as French Indo-China. A glance at the map will show that Viet Nam forms the extreme south-eastern salient of Asia, while to the West lies Siam with whom there is a very long common frontier. The northern border of Viet Nam, it is to be observed, marches with China for about seven hundred miles through hilly country which it would be by no means easy to defend against infiltration from China.

To the West of Siam lies Burma, which has been in a state of chronic disorder and civil war ever since it obtained its independence from Great Britain, and which will clearly be fertile soil for Russian activities once it suits Moscow to initiate them on any considerable scale. Finally, in the extreme South, though divided from Viet Nam by the Gulf of Siam, is the Malay Peninsula, where a considerable force of British troops is occupied in a ceaseless struggle to suppress the Communist banditti, whose English friends are now allowed by courtesy of the B.B.C. to put their case to the relatives of the men who are being murdered there.

Inside Viet Nam the situation resembles that in Greece before the recent improvement in that country. The government of the Emperor Bao Dai, which has recently been formally acknowledged by Great Britain, is confronted by the rebel Communist regime of Ho Chi-minh, which is recognized by Russia. Ho Chi-minh was trained in Moscow, and has been a Communist organizer of the familiar pattern for several years. The Emperor, on the other hand, exercises his authority within the framework of the French Union, and is strongly in favour of the closest co-operation both with France and the Anglo-Saxon Powers. His position in this respect, however, is not rendered any easier by the chronic political instability in Paris.

As to the relative strength of the opposing

forces the French Minister for Overseas Territories told the National Assembly the other day that the French troops in Viet Nam numbered 110,000, while Ho Chi-minh had approximately 80,000 men at his disposal, though now that China is in Communist hands there is only too much reason to suppose that reinforcements and supplies will come to the rebels across the Chinese border, just as Markos and the Greek insurgents were helped from Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

DURING the past few weeks there have been two meetings of statesmen to consider these developments, one of them in Moscow and one in Colombo. The Chinese Communist leader, Mao Tse-Tung, spent a considerable time in the Russian capital, and some pretty hard bargaining clearly took place there. The ultimate object of Russia is not in doubt, and it is to reduce China to the position of her satellite states in Europe, for her ambitions in Central Asia and the Far East have changed very little from what they were in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Mao Tse-Tung, on the other hand, would be neither human nor a Chinaman if he did not desire to pay as little as possible for the continuance of Russian support. On the face of it he seems to have done very well for his own country during his visit to Moscow, for by the Sino-Russian treaty concluded last month he has persuaded Stalin to give up, by 1952 at latest, the thirty-year lease of the Port Arthur naval base which the Russians obtained from General Chiang Kai-shek in 1945. He has, further, been promised the return, also by 1952, of the Manchurian railways to exclusively Chinese ownership and operation. Finally, Mao Tse-Tung has obtained credits of three hundred million dollars over a period of five years for the purchase of industrial equipment in the Soviet Union.

What is surprising, in view of Russian ambitions and interests, is the absence of any *quid pro quo* for the concessions made to Peking. However, what has been given to China can be taken back, and Mr. Acheson was fully justified in his comment that it was not a happy augury that since the end of the war no nation has signed a treaty with Russia which has led to a happy relationship. The Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* is equally right when he says that "the published agreements appear to fit very well into the present strategy of the Russian cold war, which is to take advantage of the Chinese revolution to undermine the interests of the Western Powers in the East."

It will be pointed out to the peoples of South-East Asia, on the evidence of this treaty, that Communism is identical with complete independence from the foreigner. The contrast, too, will be stressed between the promised withdrawal of the Russian troops from Port Arthur with the presence of British forces in Hong Kong and a French army in Viet Nam. If and when the Russians will withdraw from Port Arthur remains, of course, to be seen, but the promise has considerable propaganda value.

MAO TSE-TUNG and his followers have, it must not be forgotten, a number of problems still to solve in spite of their sweeping successes. The Union Jack still flies over Hong Kong; Tibet may not prove the easiest of conquests; and the assistance of Russia may well be essential if the situation in Viet Nam, Siam, and Malaya is to be fully exploited. In this connection it should not be forgotten that China has shadowy claims to the hegemony of these three countries, as well as to Burma, which go back many centuries; these claims could always be revived should the occasion serve.

We have seen in the case of Yugoslavia and Russia that a common ideology is no guarantee of international friendship, and there is no reason to assume that China and Russia will necessarily work together because Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung both profess the doctrines of Marx. Nevertheless, for the present at any

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rate, the two Powers have need of one another, and it would be idle to expect an early breach between them. There will be a good deal of manoeuvring for position, as there was during the discussions at Moscow, but there can be no disguising the fact that Russia and China have the same end in view, namely, the establishment of Communism all over the continent of Asia.

AT Colombo the meeting of statesmen had the object of combating this menace, and if differences of opinion revealed themselves at Moscow they were equally present in Ceylon. One of the real obstacles in the way of forming a united anti-Communist front in Asia is the *malaise* which exists betwen India and Pakistan, and any form of collaboration between them in the matter of defence is going to be extremely difficult to secure. Yet they are both in the front line, for there are Communist forces within striking distance of Kashmir, and Tibet is being more seriously menaced every day. As Lord Tweedsmuir pointed out in this Review last month, never before have two British Dominions possessed a common frontier, and more than one of the existing difficulties is due to the fact that India and Pakistan do possess just such a frontier.

Pandit Nehru could not really be described as helpful at Colombo. He is fully alive to the danger of Communism at home, and he is prepared to countenance the most drastic measures for the curtailment of its activities, but he does not appear to understand its international implications. In Viet Nam, for example, the choice is between the Emperor Bao Dai and the Communist Ho Chi-minh, but Pandit Nehru is still looking for some third course which does not exist. The danger is that, like so many democratic statesmen of recent years, he may be overtaken by events to which he had closed his eyes.

Whatever may or may not have been said during the Sino-Russian negotiations at the Kremlin we may be sure that sight was never lost of the fact that the international situation must be regarded as one connected whole. Thanks very largely to the activities of the Chinese Communists large forces of British and French troops are locked up in the Far East which would otherwise be available to serve as a check on Russian ambitions in Europe; this has certainly not escaped the notice of Moscow. Similarly, the Western Powers and their allies must take the wider view, while they must not forget that their opponents are operating on interior lines, and are invested with all the prestige that accrues from an uninterrupted series of victories—always a matter of great importance in the East. One could wish that these considerations were more fully appreciated in official circles; no one outside, and hardly anyone inside, the country is really deluded by statements to the effect that "British prestige was never higher than it is to-day".

THE American decision not to give armed support to the defence of Formosa was, all the same, a wise one. That the United States has met with a reverse of the first magnitude in China it would be impossible to deny; the work, both moral and material, of more than a half-a-century has been undone in a few months, but Formosa is militarily indefensible. In view of its proximity to the mainland, and its distance from any American base, it might easily have become a larger and more tragic Crete. Nor, although the consideration may be beside the point, is there any evidence that the inhabitants of Formosa wish for a continuance of Nationalist rule in their island; whatever they may have suffered under the Japanese all the evidence goes to show that their present rulers are as little to their taste, and they may well feel that they could not be any worse off under the Communists. However this may be, had American troops been landed in Formosa they would almost certainly have been handicapped by fifth column activities.

Nevertheless, the decision leaves Hong Kong dangerously isolated. The nearest

European forces are the French troops, fully committed, in Viet Nam, and the British struggling against the Communist banditti in Malaya; in the islands, such as the Philippines and the new Indonesian republic, the position, where it is not obscure, is unsettled, and it is frequently both. Not until far-off Japan is reached can relative security and stability be found, a fact which cannot fail to provide the cynic with some ground for amusement.

The opening weeks of 1950 have thus seen posed in a more acute form the question which had been raised during the latter part of 1949, namely, can South-East Asia be held against the Communist advance? If not, what is to be the fate of India and Pakistan? It will indeed be surprising if the new Parliament is not called upon to give serious attention to these developments very early in its existence.

TO turn to Europe. Here the situation, at any rate superficially, would not appear to be nearly so favourable to Russia. The general advance of Communism to the West has been halted; Marshal Tito is still defiant, and it would not be surprising if Albania were to follow his example; King Paul of the Hellenes is more firmly seated on his throne than ever; and there are persistent rumours of widespread resistance movements to Russian rule in Rumania and the Ukraine. Nor is this all, in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria the authority of Russia is being almost exclusively maintained by terrorist methods.

In these circumstances what would suit Moscow best would be a period of calm in Europe during which she could restore the situation there to her own advantage, and reap the harvest of Communist success in Asia. To this extent history is repeating itself, for during the past two or three centuries there are several examples of Russian inactivity in one diplomatic or military theatre while she concentrated her energies on another. Unfortunately for her, the great international problems are now so interconnected that it is nothing like as easy to pursue this policy as was the case in the past.

The present position in Austria is an excellent example. No special Russian interest is served by the presence of Russian troops in that country, and their withdrawal, which would follow the conclusion of an Austrian peace treaty, would do much to diminish the fears of the Western Powers. Yet Russia dare not take this step because once the Austrian treaty is signed she is bound by international agreement to evacuate Hungary and Rumania within ninety days, which she dare not do. It is true that she might violate this agreement as she has violated many another, but that would defeat the very purpose for which she would have signed a peace treaty with Austria, namely to lull the Western Powers into security.

Another instance is France. Whatever the effect upon Great Britain and the United States, disorder must be encouraged in that country in the hope of frightening the French Government into bringing home its troops from Viet Nam, and so facilitating the operations of Ho Chi-minh and his friends in Communist China. Hence the deliberately discourteous treatment of the French protest against the Russian recognition of the rebel administration in Viet Nam.

THERE can, unhappily, be no doubt but that France is weak, not so much materially as morally, and a weak France is always a danger to Europe. The Fourth Republic has inherited many of the vices of the Third, notably the instability of its governments, and it has failed to provide a rallying-point for men of divers views. It is true that the great breach of the Revolution has never been healed, but the Second World War deepened other rifts in the body politic, and the result is that France to-day is not one nation, but several. For centuries the great unifying force was the monarchy; in what they thought was their wisdom the French got rid of that, and they have ever since been trying to find something to put in its place. That is at the root of the present trouble.

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Such a situation is very much to the advantage of an aggressive Power like Russia. For reasons which do not concern us here Communism has a very considerable number of adherents in France, and they can be relied upon to create trouble when, as at present, it suits Moscow that they should do so. To crush them would necessitate the use of force, and that would drive the M.R.P. and its allies into the arms of General de Gaulle. It would also in all probability result in civil war, which would weaken France still further. In fact, it is just the sort of situation in which Russia delights, and can so easily turn to her advantage.

ELSEWHERE in Western and Southern Europe the political situation is not discouraging. The Scandinavian countries, including even Finland, though by no means comfortable in the close proximity of their Russian neighbour, are looking to the West for support, and no longer show any signs of undue subservience to Moscow, as at one time seemed to be the case. The Netherlands has its difficulties in consequence of the establishment of the new regime in what was until yesterday the Dutch East Indies, but at home the opportunities for Communist intrigue are few. Belgium, indeed, is divided over the question of the return of King Leopold III, but the Belgians are a level-headed race, and it is to be hoped that this problem will be amicably settled in a few weeks' time.

Further South, General Franco and Dr. Salazar can be relied upon to keep their respective countries clear of Communism and Communists, even if their methods do not always meet with the approval of some people in Great Britain and the United States, who are unfamiliar with the horrors of civil war at first-hand. In Italy, the signs are that Communism is on the wane, though it is true that Signor de Gasperi's government has been making somewhat heavy weather lately, largely owing to internal dissensions. One of the weaknesses of Italian politics to-day is that the leaders are too old, and the young men do not seem to be coming forward; a young monarchist with real initiative, for example, could soon become a dominating factor. As for Greece, the improvement in the situation there has already been noted. Lastly, whatever else may be happening in Western Germany, there is no indication of any move to the extreme Left.

Thus, except where France is concerned, there is nothing in the political situation to the South and West of the Iron Curtain to encourage Russia, and it would probably suit her to let well alone there for the present and to concentrate upon Asia. In this way she might be able to persuade the Western Powers that they were not in any real danger at all. The imponderable is whether she can fool all the Allied statesmen all the time. "Peace is indivisible," Litvinoff used to declare; the Politburo may discover that the same is true of foreign policy.

NEVER has there been a time when it could be said with greater truth that eternal vigilance was the price of peace. General Fuller shows what this means in terms of armaments, but armaments and diplomacy must go hand-in-hand; we tried to separate them during the Twenty Years' Armistice to our complete undoing. Recently what is termed the super-bomb has made its appearance, and already voices are being raised, as were in the case of its atomic predecessor, to the effect that if we can only keep its secrets from the Russians all will be well. Never was there a greater misconception. Neither a weapon nor an organization—whether it be called the League of Nations or UNO—will keep the peace by itself.

It is to be hoped that the new Parliament will not forget these things, and will see to it that our rulers do not forget them either, for, as the *Washington Post* very well summarized the situation a week or two ago, "The Western world in the next three months will have need to brace itself for a warming up of the cold war."

THE DEFENCE OF EUROPE

By J. F. C. FULLER *

I THE PAST

EUROPE is an Asiatic promontory, and though geographically it now includes European Russia—the Scythia of the ancients—for centuries that vast land was so remote from Western Europe that not until the reign of Edward VI was "the kingdome of Moscovia" discovered by Richard Chancellor, whose description of it is pronouncedly Asiatic. Further, the strategic eastern flank of the European promontory, which approximately stretches from the mouth of the Vistula to the mouth of the Dniester, and thence by way of the Bosphorus to the Mediterranean, possessing few obstacles, is open to attack from the east: a fact which has predicated that, ever since the days of Herodotus, the historic military problem of Europe has been to hold this flank against Asiatic attack.

First, we watch the struggle between the Persians and the Greeks, followed by the great counter-attack of the west led by Alexander the Great, who carried his phalangites and Companions to the river Beas in the Punjab. Next the struggle between Romans and Carthaginians, and though the latter operated from North Africa, they were racially an Asiatic people. After the collapse of Rome and the chaos resulting, we see a series of great invasions, which brought the Slavs and other Asiatic peoples to the Elbe and the Danube—where the Russians stand to-day. This expansion was followed by an astonishing revival of the west. Starting with Charlemagne, by the close of the eleventh century the Asiatic tribes were either subdued, absorbed or pushed back to the Vistula and the Dniester, and Europe, as we know her, began to take form. Meanwhile Rurik and his brothers, princes of Rus, passed over from Sweden to the Neva, and at Novgorod established their capital. Shortly after it was moved to Kiev on the Dnieper, and a Western Russia Empire was born.

NO sooner were the Slavonic tribes subdued or pushed eastwards out of Europe, than a new struggle, known as the Crusades, saw that continent at clinch with the Saracens, another Asiatic enemy, and when this great series of wars was approaching its end, yet another Asiatic foe appeared. This time it was the Mongols under Ogotai and Batu, who sweeping over the steppes of Russia destroyed Kiev "the mother of cities". Part of this incursion, known as the Golden Horde, settled in the Caspian region, and from there for two hundred years its khans by reducing the Christian princes of Russia to servitude Tartarized them.

Meanwhile in the south other Asiatic enemies emerged, first the Seljuk and next the Ottoman Turks. In 1453 the latter, by extinguishing the Eastern Roman Empire, severed the last cultural link between the Russian princedoms and the west. But in compensation, a little before this catastrophe occurred, Timur the Lame had overrun the Golden Horde, and under Ivan III (1440–1505) the Grand Dukedom of Muscovy, now completely Mongolized, began to emerge as a second and this time Orientalized Russia. Marrying Zoe Paleologus, niece of the last of the Eastern Roman emperors, Ivan III declared that "Moscow has become now the third Rome and there will never be a fourth one". Thus, 450 years before Lenin formulated the aim of Bolshevism, the

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Russians began to believe that they were a people destined to rule the western world.

FROM 1453 onwards for over a century the terror of the Turks hung like a storm cloud over Europe, and not until the victory of the Holy League at Lepanto, in 1571, did it begin to lift, to be finally dispersed as a major inter-continental problem by Prince Eugene at the battle of Zenta in 1697.

That same year an event occurred out of which was gradually to develop the present great Asiatic-European conflict: Peter the Great set out with an embassy to visit Europe, and there having studied gunnery, ship-building, anatomy, engraving and a host of other things, on his return he set about westernizing his Asiatic barbarians and building St. Petersburg—his "window opening upon the West". His energy was prodigious; his barbarity seldom equalled, and his masterly reforms were in time destined to be catastrophic for Europe. His one all-absorbing problem was to turn his country into a western military state, and at the close of his reign, in 1725, he had marshalled on the eastern flank of Europe a regular army 210,000 strong supported by 109,000 irregulars, and in the Baltic and Black Sea he had built a fleet of 48 ships of the line and 787 galleys and lesser craft. Like the hordes of Darius, this armed host gloomed over the eastern horizon of the west a portent of things to come, and in shadowy form Peter's victory over Charles XII of Sweden at Poltava, in 1709, may be likened to Marathon in reverse.

"The Russia of Peter the Great," writes his biographer Waliszewski, "is a factory and a camp," for he made his "Russians a nation of officials, labourers and soldiers". Scores of thousands of his conscripted serfs perished in the swamps of the Neva during the building of St. Petersburg, and in January, 1718, when the brutalities of his reign reached their summit in the trial of his unfortunate son the Tsarevitch Alexis, we find La Vie writing from St. Petersburg, ". . . that it seems like a place of disaster; we live in a sort of public infection, everyone is either an accuser or an accused person".

PETER'S greatest achievement was to weld European efficiency to Russian barbarism, and out of this union emerged the Third Russia, a pseudo-morphosis, as Oswald Spengler calls it. "You can believe" wrote Leibnitz at the time of Poltava, "how much the revolution in the north astonished many people. It is commonly said that the Tsar will be formidable for all Europe, and will be like a northern Turk". A new threat to Europe had arisen; once again Asia was on the move, but this time her Mongoloid hordes were girt in the panoply of the West.

Nor had Europe long to wait. In 1757, during the Seven Years War, the Russians advanced into Prussia, perpetrating unheard of barbarities. In 1760, they entered Berlin, and fifty-five years later Alexander I, Tsar of all the Russias, rode in triumph through the streets of Paris. Thus Russia took her place among the great European Powers; outwardly like them, but inwardly still Asiatic: a fact not overlooked by Napoleon, who a few years later from St. Helena predicted that within a century Europe would be Cossack or Republican.

WITH the nineteenth century came the great counter-attack of Europe on Asia, which brought vast tracts of the Asiatic continent under European rule. It was not a crusade, for its aims were economic and strategical and not ideological, and its effects were to westernize Asia, much as Russia had been westernized by Peter the Great. The Japanese were the first of the Asiatic peoples to learn that without European armaments there can be no national independence.

This period ended with the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, which led to three prodigious results: First, it prepared the way for the coming of Lenin, who, in 1905, published his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy;* secondly, Asia, moved by the war from end to end, awoke from her sleep of centuries,

and, lastly, the balance of power in Europe was unhinged; Russia being now powerless, France won over Great Britain as an ally in her historic quarrel with Germany, which had distracted Europe since the days of Richelieu.

The last of these effects and the repercussions arising out of it went far to precipitate the First World War, during which western Europe went into alliance with two Asiatic Powers—Russia and Japan—against Germany and Austria, the historic bastions protecting Europe against Asia. The main results of this war were also three-fold: Pan-Germanism, one of the major causes of the conflict, if not extinguished was eclipsed; the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, by removing the second of the above bastions, tilted the balance of power between Europe and Asia in favour of the latter, and lastly, the Russian Revolution brought to an end the pseudo-morphosis of Russia: severing her from western culture it released Pan-Slavism in its Asiatic form, as glimpsed by Ivan III in his vision of the third and last Rome.

LENIN, partly Tartar by blood, was profoundly Tartar in spirit. Adopting the catchwords, clichés and catcalls of Marxism as his idiom, he wrapped in them his aim, which was to revert to the methods of Peter the Great, to say nothing of those of Ivan the Terrible and Genghis Khan, by welding American efficiency to Asiatic barbarism, and out of them to create the Fourth Russia, which was to conquer the world. Listen to him: "We are still hampered by old prejudices . . . but every hour these are fading. More and more effectually we now defend and represent seventy per cent of the population of the earth. If our international comrades help us . . . no defeats can prevent the success of our mission. This mission is . . . to bring to triumph the cause of the World Revolution, to create the Soviet Republic of the World."

In 1918, as the first objective in his campaign of conquest, he laid down that "The proletariat of industrial Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, in uniting with the proletariat of Russia will create a mighty agrarian and industrial combination from Vladivostok to the Rhine, from the Finnish Gulf to the blue waters of the Danube, capable of feeding itself and of confronting the reactionary capitalism of Britain with a revolutionary giant, which with one hand would disturb the senile tranquillity of the East and with the other beat back the pirate capitalism of Anglo-Saxon countries. If there were anything that could compel the English whale to dance, it would be the union of revolutionary Russia with a revolutionary Central Europe". Such was the initial objective of this mechanized Mohammed.

Though the virulence of the Russian Revolution has obscured the fact, that revolution was no more than the spearhead of the Asiatic Revolution released by the First World War. Everywhere we see strivings, risings, revolts and rebellions releasing Asia from her European shackles. Between 1919 and 1939, in India, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan and China the cauldron of Asia was boiling over, and as it was doing so the Armistice of 1918 ended.

THE Second World War was precipitated by Pan-Germanism passing out of its 1918 eclipse, and it ended by bringing Pan-Slavism into perihelion with Lenin's aim. Though Hitler's aims may have been as evil as his means of realizing them were ruthless, at heart he was a good European from the inter-continental point of view; for he saw that the one great danger the western world stood in was that it might be transfixed by Russia—the spearhead of Asia. He was fundamentally an anti-Asiatic, whereas his opponents, though from their national points of view they were right to set out to frustrate his Pan-Germanism which threatened their liberties, by linking themselves with Russia, and surrendering to her ambitions at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam, they succeeded in destroying the last remaining great bastion

which had stood between Western Europe and Asia for nearly a thousand years.

II THE PRESENT

WHEREAS a little over ten years ago the strategic problem was a Germanic one set within the framework of the historic problem of Asia *versus* Europe, to-day it is the reverse. Then the attention of the two great Western Powers—Great Britain and France—was so riveted upon the immediate danger arising out of the National Socialist Revolution that they overlooked the latter. Had they not done so, they would have seen that though for their individual security it was necessary to restrict German expansion, were they to annihilate Germany the second and greater problem, always latent, would inevitably emerge. It did, and the result to-day is that Europe has been split into two, and not only is there now a Western and an Eastern Europe, but the latter is a satrapy of Russia. Therefore two problems now face the Western Powers: the first is the security of Western Europe against a further Russian advance, and the second is the regaining or reconquest of Eastern Europe, so that Europe may once again be reunited. Even without Eastern Europe, could Western Europe permanently hold her own, never being able to feel secure, Western European countries would have to be placed on a permanent war footing. Therefore, whatever way we look at the problem, remembering Lenin's aim, two alternatives face Western Europeans: war with Russia or absorption by Russia, and of the two the second is incomparably the more disastrous, for it carries with it the end of western culture.

The second alternative suits Russia best, not only because, if successful, it is incomparably the more economical, but because the Russian autocratic state capitalist system, though politically strong, is economically inefficient. It demands such abnormal sacrifices from the people that, in order to keep them tranquil, it is necessary to cut them off from all knowledge of the living conditions in other countries. This, of course, becomes impossible should the Russians invade Western Europe, which they could have done at any time since the end of the last war. In my opinion it was fear that history might repeat itself, more so than the atomic bomb which restrained them from doing so.

"After the Battle of Leipzig, 1813," writes Vladimer L. Borin, who knows Russia well, "the Russians marched as far as Paris, passing through the whole of Germany. The psychological effect of this direct impression of Western Europe upon the Russians was very deep. They realized that Russia was not the first country in the world, but rather among the last and most backward. They realized that everything they had been taught at home about the superiority of their country had been an official lie. There were among them young aristocrats and army officers who had had no other direct experience of European life and the effect upon these was especially pronounced. In the Western Europe with which they now came in contact they came in touch with freemasons and return home as revolutionaries".

THE revelation vouchsafed to these young aristocrats led to the Decembrists revolt of 1825, and from it dates the Russian revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century, which culminated in Lenin's Third International. Hence the technique of the cold war by conspiratorial subversion instead of by military conquest, because it obviates a repetition of the danger inherent in lifting the iron curtain.

This poisonous type of war was first launched in 1919, and the present cold war is no more than its adult and after-war phase, the first round of which ended with the lifting of the Berlin blockade last summer. The second round immediately followed and was opened by the establishment of the Federal Republic of Western Germany at Bonn and of the Eastern Democratic Republic at Berlin, since when the problem of

Europe *versus* Asia has for the time being been replaced by that of Western *versus* Eastern Germany—the champions of Europe and Asia. As this is so, it stands to reason that, unless the Western Powers back the Bonn Government to the full, they are likely to lose the vital second round; for, as we shall now see, the dice are already heavily loaded against them.

Though the Bonn and Berlin governments are politically at daggers drawn, there is one common bond which links together their divergent ideologies. It is that, whatever be his politics, no true German, Western or Eastern, will or can tolerate a permanent division of his country. And, be it remembered, the joker is in the Russian hand; for at any time Russia can offer the whole of German unity on terms by promising to return to both the Western and Eastern Germans their lost lands east of the Oder-Niesse line, if they will unite and recognize Moscow as their Mecca. Further it would seem well worth while for the Russians to do so, seeing that, should they succeed in uniting the two Germanies, they will gain the western frontier of Western Germany as their satellite front line. Though the Western Powers are not so happily placed to make an equivalent offer, it should be obvious to them that, unless they make the unification of Germany the main plank in their German policy, they will never succeed in winning the good will of the Western Germans.

TO appreciate what this means, the Western Powers must get out of their heads the idea that Russia's primary aim is the conquest of Western Europe by force; for clearly it is to attain Lenin's aim, the establishment of what Bakunin called "The Knouto-Germanic Empire". Stalin, being no fool, must realize that, in spite of the Atlantic Pact, without Western Germany the defence of Western Europe is strategically impossible. Hence the creation of the Eastern German *Volkspolizie* (People's Police), which is to be converted into a *Volksarmee* (People's Army), of which, so it is reported, six divisions will be fully equipped for war this year. Once this army becomes operative, the Russian occupying forces are likely to be withdrawn into Poland, a manoeuvre which will almost certainly compel the Western Powers to follow suit; for if they do not, Western Germany will be dubbed a Quisling State. As there is no convenient Poland for the western garrisons to withdraw into, these forces will have to return to their respective countries, and once withdrawn the next Russian step is likely to be to order the Berlin Government to concoct a *causus belli* which will "justify" an invasion of Western Germany without directly involving Russia.

From this it is clear that the Western Powers must be prepared not only to prevent Russia over-running Western Europe, but also the East Germans over-running Western Germany. By 1952, at latest, they must be prepared to meet an Eastern German army possibly more powerful than their present occupying forces. Or if by then they have withdrawn their garrisons and should Western Germany still remain unarmed, they must be prepared to see the establishment of the Knouto-Germanic Empire. Therefore, to prevent this, their aim should be to make Western Germany militarily so strong that either the Berlin Government will hesitate to attack, or should it be ordered to do so, it will risk being beaten back without Allied intervention. Conversely, should the Western Powers become seriously involved in preventing the over-running of Western Germany by the *Volksarmee*, under cover of this German civil war Russia will be admirably placed to strike at the Near East—the strategic hub of the Old World. Probably this is Russia's main military objective; for it is a far more profitable one than would be the invasion of Western Europe.

POLITICALLY, the Bonn Government is in a strong position to attain its ultimate aims, which can be no other than to get rid of all restrictions now imposed upon Western

Germany. Further, it possesses considerable bargaining power; for it can play off Russia against the Allies, and whenever it likes place face up on the conference table its trump card —*rapprochement* with Russia. Also the disarmed state of Western Germany is for the time being a distinct political asset; for Dr. Adenauer must be well aware that with the cessation of E.R.P. the armed protection of Germany will become intolerable to the Western Powers. As *The Economist* has pointed out: "The threat of cutting off Marshall Aid remains the sole sanction that can be applied to a recalcitrant German Government."

To avoid their control of Western Germany developing into a tragic farce, the Western Powers must once and for all decide upon a realistic policy, advantageous not only to themselves but also to the Bonn Government, and because of past errors, whether it be humiliating or not, it must be a policy of give rather than of take.

Its initial aim must be the winning over of the good will of all Western Germans, and its ultimate—the unification not only of Germany but also of historic Europe. To attain the first, two steps are essential: (1) A general amnesty to bring the last war morally to an end, and (2) the removal of all political, economic and financial restrictions, so that the Bonn Government may assume sovereign powers. And to assist in accomplishing the second, the rearmament of Western Germany must not only be urged but aided. With this last item we enter the region of strategy.

TO secure the Continent of Europe against Asiatic aggression, western strategy must also have two aims, again an ultimate and an immediate. The first is the liberation of Eastern Europe, and the second the defence of Western Europe including Western Germany which is its counterscarp. As both involve the possibilities of a world war in which the side possessing the highest war potentials is the more likely to win, I will restrict my remarks to this aspect of the problem.

Until the Russians solved the secret of the atomic bomb, Mr. Churchill may have been right when he said that since the end of the recent war this weapon alone had prevented further Russian aggression. But now that it is no longer an American monopoly, man power is likely to become the deciding factor, and in approximate figures the size of the populations from which it is drawn is as follows: European members of the Atlantic Pact, 178,000,000, America, 140,000,000, and Russia and her satellites, 255,000,000 (omitting Yugoslavia). Though industrial man-power favours the west, military man-power favours Russia, because, except in the air, American fighting man-power cannot to any great extent intervene in the initial phase of a European war.

The deficit of 77,000,000 people between the Western European Powers and Russia and her satellites is due, however, purely to political reasons, which at any moment can be made good by bringing Western Germany and Spain into the Atlantic Alliance: the one has a population of 55,000,000 and the other of 28,000,000.

IN the critical circumstances in which the Western Powers are placed, the exclusion of Spain is as farcical as was the exclusion of England from the Holy League of 1571. Then the reason given was that Queen Elizabeth was a Protestant, now the reason is that General Franco is a Fascist, which actually he is not. But the exclusion of Western Germany is not only farcical but suicidal, for without her potential fighting man-power, unless the bulk of the French regular army, now in Indo-China, is withdrawn to France, and the bulk of the British army, at present strung out between Tripoli and Hong Kong, is brought back to England, the Atlantic Pact is little more than a strategic vacuum.

Because the defence of Western Europe must begin in Western Germany, and because it is imperative that the Ruhr should not pass into Russia's hands or into those of her East German satellite, the British, American

and French General Staffs realize that eventually a Western German Army will have to be raised. Nevertheless, the British Foreign Office adheres to the policy of placating Russia with war crimes trials and dismantlement. In the foreign affairs debate of last November, Mr. Bevin, when reviewing the situation, showed a complete blindness of facts, events and the probable future. Having stated that dismantling would be modified, he hastily added, but "in no circumstances will we give way on war plants or that type of thing". No circumstances includes the *Volksarmee;* therefore, should that army grow into a powerful force, backed by the might of Russia, it would appear that Western Europe is to be sacrificed because Mr. Bevin does not realize that the problem is not to prevent a repetition of the last war, but to prepare against the problematical next.

Though both the ultimate and immediate strategical problems are hypothetical to the extent that they depend upon the outbreak of a third World War, there is a third strategical problem which is actual. It is the psychological or cold war Russia had been waging for over thirty years.

IDEAS are not defeated by bullets: ideas are conquered by ideas. The Russians realize this to the full, the Western Powers ignore it altogether. Whereas the first have a fixed idea, a fixed policy and the powerful engine of the Cominform to put it over, the second have no fixed idea, no fixed policy and no great instrument of propaganda. To suggest that they should create an anti-Cominform is easy; but to suppose that they will do so is to misread Western history; for never since the first Crusades have European nations in bulk laid aside their mutual antagonisms and quarrels in order to face an Asiatic enemy. Therefore it may be assumed that the Russian cold war will continue unopposed, until it either achieves its end without war, or becomes so intolerable that the Western Powers will resort to war to rid themselves of it. Since 1945, this war, though world-wide has been centred in Berlin, from where there can be little doubt it will increasingly be directed against Western Germany. Therefore, surely, the least the Western Powers can do in order to counteract it is to win over the good will and respect of the Germans and Spaniards, and thereby turn the Atlantic Pact into a strategic plenitude.

Thus far in her turbulent history, Europe, a small promontory jutting out of the western flank of Asia, has survived as an independent continent. Partly because of her topography, her mountains, rivers and forests which made her difficult to attack; partly also through good fortune; but mainly because her culture fostered a valiant people who begot great spiritual, military and commercial leaders. Further, this culture led to a civilization both morally and technically superior to any other in the world, which endowed the European with faith in his destiny.

TO-DAY, because of the westernization of Asia, these advantages have worn thin. Asia has become equally technically minded and equally well-armed, and no one can deny the valour of the Russians or doubt their faith in their diabolic creed. But whereas formerly Asiatic invaders ravaged, conquered and annexed, the aim of Russia is to add to these normal acts of war, first the subversion and lastly the obliteration of the culture of the west, in order that the small promontory called Europe may sink back again in the Asiatic land mass.

This is veritably the Age of Anti-Christ, and if we Europeans, the people who belong to what still culturally is Christendom, would save not only our lands but our souls, we must have faith in ourselves, in our culture and in our destiny. If we have, and if we remember that, however divergent be our tongues and problems, we are a common race —a cultural brotherhood—once again, God permitting, we shall triumph over Asia. If we do not, failing a miracle, Europe is doomed, and like Rome will pass under the yoke of the barbarians, this time Asiatics.

Short Story

CH'IH CHIH YU KU YEN CHIH CH'ENG LI*

By LESLIE BONNET

SPRING is green in Szechewan, bright green in the rice-fields, and yellow too with the blinding imperial yellow of the flowering rape. The punctual "Little Rains" have come and gone. It is now the season of "Excited Insects".

Chang stands in the dusty roadway above the paddy fields, just where a faint track breaks off toward the tangle of bamboo which hides the hovel of General Wang. His face is quite expressionless so that it is clear that trouble has come upon him. In his faded blue gown he looks dispirited, irresolute.

He is, I am able to tell, debating within himself whether to call upon the General.

THIS Wang, it must be explained, is not a General in the ordinary sense of the term. He has never, for instance, commanded any troops or conducted any campaign. But at some preposterously remote period he had submitted a memorandum on military stratagems to the Imperial Court, so aptly furnished with pleasing references, and executed in such exquisite calligraphy that the rank was forthwith bestowed upon him. Since then he has lived in great renown and great poverty, frequently consulted by military commanders, who do not think the laborious journey into the Western Regions too great a price to pay for the honour of his advice.

Because he is too poor to borrow from he is the only real friend left to Chang in this locality.

So, though it is money he needs, it is advice that Chang thinks to get from General Wang.

HIS troubles are so commonplace that they can be related very succinctly indeed.

He is a farmer with short legs and flat feet. A creditor named Foo is pressing him hard for the repayment of 1,000 dollars. Foo is an implacable man, deaf to any appeal, incapable of any generous impulses. He threatens that unless the money is paid by the 20th day of the Limping Dragon month he will approach the magistrate; and he is a man of his word. If Chang should be condemned by the magistrate he is certain to be cast into the Prison of Sundry Inconveniences for a considerable time.

As an ordinary man, Chang is, of course, quite prepared to take any steps short of bloodshed to get himself out of a difficulty.

He has, however, a case to plead, since the 1,000 dollars was lost during the course of an evening's gambling with Foo when Chang, to Foo's certain knowledge, was in an intoxicated condition induced by peach blossom wine. Chinese law, if enforced, does not hold a man responsible for monetary obligations incurred in such a condition.

The magistrate, from whose decisions there is no appeal, is a weak-minded man. He owes his position to Foo's influence and is also his son-in-law.

IT is now the second day of the Limping Dragon month. On the third day of the month occurs a festival known as The Day of Peaceful Rest.

Only this morning Chang received from his bankers a statement of his account which showed a small overdraft. Enclosed was a letter, testy in tone, refusing further advances.

* Reasoned Argument

His only other resources are four dollars in hard cash and one paddy field on which a good crop of rice is now three inches high. This rice will be fit for reaping in three months time and should then be worth, after the landowners share has been deducted, 4,000 dollars.

Unluckily this is not the first time that Chang has been in financial trouble. So often has he been forced to borrow money from his friends in the village, and so seldom has he found it possible to repay, that financial accommodation locally is out of the question. Nor has he any prospect of succour farther afield. His house and furniture are already heavily mortgaged.

Chang's wife, Lingering Fragrance, is an ill-favoured scold, but a remarkably good cook. She has borne Chang five children, the eldest of which is nine years old. So the youngest is four.

A LODGER named Bo has just taken up residence in the Chang household. He comes from a far province and has not yet met any of the local inhabitants. He paid for his accommodation for three months in advance on his arrival two days ago. It were better had he retained this sum, for Bo is not a gambler. Unfortunately, in an effort to retrieve his fortunes, Chang lost it all in the village tea shop the same evening at mah-jongg.

The lodger, Bo, is a big slow-witted, amiable man who has two weaknesses, first a passion for playing the Chinese fiddle and second a love of children. Like many big men he is a hearty eater. He has also, as Chang's quick eye soon noticed, 2,000 dollars which he carries around with him and which he keeps hidden in an old sock in his room when he is sleeping.

WHILE we are relating all this Chang makes up his mind. He treads the path, steps over the fallen bamboo gate and, pushing through the tangle to a clearing, finds General Wang reclining in a ruined room open to the day.

He salutes him humbly. He offers as a present a live fowl which he produces with an air of weary wizardry from under his gown. It is rejected, offered again, rejected, offered again and—to cut a very long story short—finally accepted.

Conversation is on conventional topics.

At long last General Wang's face assumes a look of stony benevolence which invites confidences. Chang thereupon tells him the whole story.

When he has finished the General sits silent for a long time, a very long time. Eventually, for it is by now evening, he rises and lights a little rape-oil lamp and sets it between them on a piece of fallen roof. Then he sits silent again.

FINALLY the General speaks:—

"My good friend Chang," he says, "all the problems that there are—military problems, domestic problems, business problems, moral problems—are really only one problem. In every situation which presses upon us so that we are in some way uncomfortable we need to determine what it is we want to give us relief and how best to get it. The same process of reasoning applies to all our situations. The problem is always the same whether it concerns the engines of war, sing-song girls or road repairs".

"Ah," says Chang absently, "the problem is always the same". But he is thinking of 1,000 dollars.

"Now", pursued Wang, "what in this situation of yours is it that you want?"

"Freedom from financial embarrassment," suggests Chang, hopelessly.

"I think not," says Wang. "That is a larger question which would involve a review of past events painful in the extreme and a course of future action too austere to contemplate. No, neither that nor simply to repay Foo. That is a course of action we may be forced to consider; but let us not cloud clear thought by adopting as an aim what is in fact only an unpleasant possibility.

"I think what you want is to liquidate Foo's claim. How to do so we must consider."

CHANG smiles with impatience.

"Now what are the factors in the situation which affect your aim," asks Wang of himself. "I think that time affects the question. Foo demands 1,000 dollars by the twentieth day of the present month. It is to-day the second day. So whatever steps you take you must take quickly."

"Agreed, agreed," says Chang with fervour.

"There is the legal aspect," continued Wang. "Under the law money lost by gamblers whose condition is such as to discourage discretion is recoverable. But Foo threatens to take the matter to court. He must, therefore, intend to plead that you were sober at the material time. In this event the decision would depend on the judge's appraisal of the veracity of the two parties. Unluckily the judge owes both his domestic and official position to his father-in-law. So he is not likely to give a verdict unfavourable to Foo.

"One must consider, of course, an appeal to Foo; but only to reject it. Foo will not accede to any requests made by you in this matter."

CHANG half rises, bowing.

"No, pray do not go," the General begs him. "Stay and consider with me the credit side of this account. Your own assets: what are they? You have no credit with your bankers; but you have four dollars in ready cash. You have a rice field which will be worth 4,000 dollars three months hence. Your house and effects are mortgaged already. Your wife's personal comeliness is such as to spare us the embarrassment of considering its exploitation. But in your house there are 2,000 dollars belonging to your lodger, Bo. You have therefore little liquid assets and the only security you have to offer is your rice crop. But none of your neighbours will take with becoming seriousness your promise to pay. Only a stranger, therefore, would regard this security as good. At the same time, of course, my dear Chang, such a stranger to be of use to you would have to be monied."

"Ah, ah," says Chang.

"This Bo," murmurs Wang, "is a stranger; and he has 2,000 dollars". He continues. "Your own outstanding personal qualities, my friend, are of course, relevant to our enquiry. You are not hampered by vulgar scruples and there are therefore courses of action open to you which would not be available to the fastidious. At the same time, however, you have physical limitations which render you unhappily vulnerable to counter-violence.

"In your household we have considered Mrs Chang; but we have not yet recalled that she is a superb cook. She should, therefore, be able to put into a good humour anyone who is fond of his food. Your five children are young. They would appeal to the child-lover."

"THEY do. They do already," Chang interposes; but Wang waves the interruption aside.

"We will consider that. But first we must appraise your lodger. He is a fervent player upon the fiddle you said. He is a hearty eater. He has not yet met our neighbours. What can we argue from these things? That he could be agreeably impressed by any desire evinced by others to listen to his fiddle playing, especially if they happened to be children. That he would be liable to become good-humoured after a satisfying meal. Because of his size he might prove a formidable opponent in physical combat. Since he is new to the locality he has no reason to distrust your unimpeachable financial integrity —yet.

"There is nothing else I think in your situation which affects your aim except the date. To-morrow is the 'Day of Peaceful Rest'. The holiday mood should engender good humour. The respite from work, dear Chang, will enable people to attend to their private affairs."

CHANG rises to his feet and bows low, three times. "I will go at once," he says, "and plead with Bo".

"Wait, I beg," says Wang. "I agree that it seems clear that your best course of action will be to borrow from Bo. Indeed, the only possible alternative would be to steal it from him. But as the money is only in Bo's room when he is sleeping there it would be difficult to abstract it without awakening him. Then the shortness of your legs and the flatness of your feet would make it easy for him to catch you and his bulk would make it easy for him to overpower you. In the pure light of reason it is a pity from this point of view that you shrink from bloodshed."

"Yes," says Wang, "the only course of action is to attempt to borrow 1,000 dollars from Bo on the security of your rice crop, using Bo's love of good food, of children and of playing his fiddle to induce an acquiescent mood".

Chang rises again.

"Pray seat yourself," the General says. "Take a cup of this jasmine green tea and I will employ myself drawing up a plan of action so that nothing shall miscarry."

CHANG sits silent, his mind half relieved listening to the brittle clatter of cicadas in the tall willow behind him. Wang busies himself with his brush.

He raises his head at last which has been bent low over the paper in the dim oil-light; and rising to his feet presents his plan to Chang.

It is in the best style. It reads:—

PLAN OF ACTION

The plan to be operated in three phases.

Phase I. To persuade Bo of the financial integrity and security of the Chang family.

Phase II. To put Bo in a good humour.

Phase III. To borrow 1,000 dollars from Bo.

Phase I. At 11.00 hours to-morrow, the Day of Peaceful Rest, Chang to invite Bo to take a walk. Chang to discourse on the way on the strict financial integrity of the Chang family and on the sacredness of his given word. On the return journey Chang to lead Bo past the rice field and to point out to him the excellence of the crop and its certain future value. Care to be taken that Bo does not converse with villagers *en route*. Mrs. Chang to spend morning preparing agreeable lunch. Children to be drilled in respectful attitude to lodger. Mrs. Chang to be warned to be civil.

Phase II. Bo to be given splendid lunch. After lunch, beaming children to invite Bo to play to them upon Chinese fiddle. Mrs. Chang to retire out of ear-shot.

Phase III. On signal from Chang, children to withdraw, bowing respectfully and thanking lodger for beautiful music. Chang to approach lodger on subject of loan.

Administrative Arrangements

House to be swept and garnished. Materials for feast to be obtained by Mrs. Chang from local resources. No expense to be spared or incurred.

CHANG folds up the paper with reverent hands. "It is a felicitous plan honoured general," he says. "It cannot fail except by faulty execution on my unworthy part. Yet if it should fail," he adds wistfully. "I shall regret that I did not attempt to steal the money first."

"There would be no need for such regret," says General Wang. It is one of the advantages of the borrowing plan that it does not preclude recourse to stealing as a second resort. It is one of the disadvantages of the stealing plan that its failure would tend to prejudice the subsequent success of an attempt to borrow.

The General sees him through the tangle of moonlit bamboo. They bow gravely the one to the other across the prostrate gate.

Chang walks with quick steps down the still roadway. Dogs bay in the now darkened village. From the General's hut comes the death-squawk of a chicken.

In his little chamber Bo sleeps noisily with his old sock under his head.

MOONS AND TIDES (ECON.)

By ERNEST BENN *

TO write upon public affairs, with a General Election interposed between the writer and the reader, is happily an unusual experience. The time lag between the delivery of the MSS., and the publication of a monthly magazine is planned to suit our leisurely trade union ways, which indeed is of no great matter for the magazine or review whose pages are reserved for considered opinion and confirmed news. All the same, that which is written on 1st February, for publication on 1st March, 1950, can have little interest for the reader if it deals with the duties of any sort of government whose chances of office have, by the intervening election, been postponed for five years.

In the wholly novel circumstances of to-day, however, I console myself by the reflection that a general election to decide whether or not King Canute should continue to listen to the experts and planners of his day, would have had no influence upon the relations between the moon and the tides. Economic moons and the tides of natural human action, take no account of the votes or opinions of those who presume to clamour for their amendment or abolition. Things have happened, are happening, and will happen, beyond the powers of any government to arrest them, and while the electors are deciding what sort of government shall be charged with the duty of governing, there is wisdom in reflecting upon facts and actions beyond the reach of political power, and considering how we stand in relation to them.

THE Prime Minister of the first of March, whatever his political colour, will have the responsibility of handling a situation without precedent, and which, whatever he may do, must deteriorate; the cake has been eaten and no longer exists. England, "this other Eden, demi-Paradise, this blessed spot, this happy breed of men", is in a very poor way. We have suffered nearly five years of effective Socialist government, but that is only the end of the story, for we are just completing fifty years of a sloppy sentimentalism in public affairs of which the present Socialism is merely the logical outcome. In the result we have murdered old virtues with new deals. Well-meaning, shallow-thinking, kindly people, aware of the scriptural injunction that "the greatest of these is Charity", have failed to notice the distinction between the real article and the giving away of other people's money. So we come to the end of the story, having lost our faith, accepted false hopes and practised a charity which is nothing of the kind.

Socialism is not a system, it is a disease, elections can only show whether or not the people have yet discovered that indubitable truth. The "something for nothing" mentality is an economic cancer, and however many millions of nothingites vote for it makes no difference to the fact.

FIFTY years ago, when the Socialist party was founded, we, in this little island, able by ourselves to grow no more than half the food we required to keep us alive did, in fact, achieve, notwithstanding its many shortcomings and blemishes, a higher general standard of living than in any country at any time, not excepting the United States of America. From that proud position we have now descended to the point where American tourists coming to Europe, go to the countries conquered by Hitler to escape the drab austerity of Utopian Britain.

Sir Ernest Benn is distinguished as an author, publisher and economist, and one of the leaders of the Individualist Movement, and President of The Society for Individual Freedom.

Hitler bombed and rendered useless three million of our homes and killed, apart from lesser casualties, sixty thousand helpless civilians. Since then the Beveridge plan has been in operation and by "social security" and "full employment" has shattered the moral basis of the worth-while life. There never was less "security", and "employment" no longer implies the obligation to work. We must wait for history to decide whether German National Socialism or the British lapse into political welfare did more damage to the cause of civilization.

ALL talk of wages, hours, prices, profits and the rest is idle twaddle, if we still think that the machinery of government can be used as a substitute for personal responsibility on the part of the governed. Shakespeare was not so deceived for he said, "security is mortals' chiefest enemy". We have had enough experience of security to know exactly what it means. Full employment, that is to say a technical claim upon salaries or wages, austerity rations bought with Marshall aid, more and more paper money and less and less of anything to buy. The absence of the natural penalty for failure to do one's duty has reduced output per man, with glorious minority exceptions, and in spite of barefaced statistical propaganda, to the lowest in our history. Our people have believed the promises of 1945, and have concentrated on their rights and forgotten their responsibilities.

There are now few thinking people who do not realize that while it is easy to make the *rich* poor, it is quite another matter to make the *poor* rich. One simple figure illustrates the lengths to which we have gone. The latest tax returns show that there were only seventy persons resident on this island with a net spendable income of £6,000 or over. The numbers of the rich have been declining for many years, but ten years ago there were still seven thousand who had this amount of net income in their own disposition; one hundred times as many as 1948. The decline goes on, and it is unlikely to-day that more than one in a million has the means to maintain what we used to regard as a good middle-class family home. The full meaning of this new and dangerous position, and its bearing upon industry, commerce and the enjoyment of the normal life of a free people, has yet to become apparent to all.

IN the short period of fifty years we have travelled the whole road, starting when no government had anything whatever to do with trade, and ending where all trade is under the dead hand of the State. To argue about taxes, pensions, houses or even groundnuts is to scratch the surface. What has happened may be described as the triumph of the producer over the consumer, for the producer is organized, and the consumer is incapable of such degradation, but it proves to be a very empty triumph.

The economic progress of the past recognized the essential supremacy of the consumer and the need to serve and satisfy the buyer. It is no accident which expresses the law of Supply and Demand in that way, Supply first, Demand second. Socialism, in practice, attempts to change the order, the theory being that one can ascertain and measure demand and then proceed to plan and organize supply. The theory ignores the forces which govern the ordinary actions of the ordinary man.

THE political endeavour to dispense with the trials and hardships natural to, and inseparable from, the uphill struggles of progress is based on the hope of repealing the natural law and putting in its place a Law of Demand and Supply. The fact that there never was any demand for progress is entirely overlooked. All through history every novelty, every innovation, indeed every important improvement, has been resented and resisted by popular opinion. Just as the Board of Admiralty scoffed at iron and steam so in modern times there is hardly a factory where latter-day Luddites are not resisting the introduction of some new type of machine. The

only demand which precedes supply is for standardization, and you cannot standardize the best. If, however, by some Utopian device, demand could be assured and all risk of failing to attract the buyer thus eliminated, all economy must go by the board. Every supplier would be free to give the whole of his mind to his own convenience and the wishes and wants of buyers or consumers would become of no importance whatever.

In times like these it is very worth while to refresh our memories of these old laws and theories, derived as they are from the experience of human ways in all the past, for such reflections help us to appreciate the better much that is happening to-day and enable us to point the moral for our future benefit.

FIRST among the disasters resulting from the attempt to reverse the natural order is the loss of the market, for there is no such thing that counts for very much in England to-day. The willing buyer and the willing seller have, for practical purposes, disappeared. Bulk buying, fixed prices, subsidies, quotas and rations, have abolished willingness and substituted force. Goodwill is a thing of the past. Price, properly so called, the result of a compromise between the willing buyer and the willing seller, is now nothing more than an official abstraction arrived at for political rather than economic reasons. The word "willing" is not to be found in any official vocabulary, and whereas a few years ago in every city and village in the world there was a measure of goodwill, or willingness, for the buyers and sellers of Great Britain, now every country is full of grievance at the real or supposed iniquities of official bargainers.

"The sanctity of contract," is a thing of the past and that again shows how far we have departed from the principles upon which civilization was constructed. It is not merely that authorities, governments, here and elsewhere set so little value on their pledged word, but that no government, no authority, can bind its successors to take a loss. The successor being like all governments, supreme judge of its own actions, will not scruple to alter terms that have proved to be unacceptable. How different from the days when individual enterprise took great pride in accepting losses and no one even thought of attempting to vary the terms of business bargains once made, and which if need be, could be enforced in the Courts of all countries.

BEFORE the politicians usurped the right of the citizen to provide for himself, the price mechanism indicated with speed and certainty the existence of plenty at any time and in any place, and scarcity elsewhere. It did not require committees of experts or official enquirers to discover the trends of production and consumption, and the need for adjusting action accordingly. The price mechanism has been put so completely out of action that we now pay a series of varying prices for the same article at the same time, and our good relations, even with our own Dominions are jeopardized by a proper sense of injustice.

The natural process named by economists the Law of Supply and Demand, has ensured to the free citizen that freedom of choice essential to the worth-while life. Now Authority, claiming to know what the people want, announces its intention of purchasing vast quantities, the effect of which is that the producers and suppliers, having, as they think, an assured market, are under no obligation to do their best. So to give only one illustration, cottages or houses now cost five times as much as they did a few years ago, and are not nearly so good. It is not a question of building for the rich, but of workers building for workers, and yet with the State in between they will not do it. We have forgotten that the duty of industry is to deliver the goods, and that unless such duty is performed industry has no reason for, or claim to existence. Of all the false thinking of recent years, there is none worse than that which considers a job in terms of wages rather than in terms of the work done.

THESE are general considerations, proper subjects for argument at any time in the last few decades. It is only now, after an expensive and destructive war that we are beginning to reap the results of half a century of wrong thinking. Millions of our people look to the Government as their Victorian fathers looked to God. With large masses of them political authority has taken the place of Heavenly guidance. In consequence, with most of us, instead of striving to satisfy our own consciences, we are reduced to acting and living by permission, a system which may perhaps be suited to Slavs and Huns, but which is the very antithesis of the spirit of all who speak the English language.

Herbert Spencer, in that wonderful prophecy, which it is the urgent duty of every responsible citizen to read and re-read, "The Man versus the State" explained in detail what would happen and foretold, with meticulous exactitude, the present rush of the weaklings for jobs as planners and permitters, telling other people what not to do. In the result, as we stand to-day, while we are all under the thumb of authority, authority itself is composed of those who, lacking the courage to stand upon their own feet and accept their share of personal responsibility, seek the safety of official positions, where they escape the consequences of error and even failure. The active, energetic and progressive section of the population which struggles to serve its day and generation in the way that it has always done, instead of leading the rest, can only move by the grace and favour of that inexperienced, sheltered, privileged class which from its very nature lacks all the qualities needed to produce the desired results.

ON a still broader view the issue is Individualism versus Collectivism. The Individualist thinks of millions of single human souls, each with a spark of Divine genius, and visualizes that genius applied to the solution of its own problems. His conception is infinitely higher than that of the politician or planner who, at best, regard these millions as material for social or political experiment or, at worst, as mere cannon fodder.

The Individualist believes self-help to be twice blest, for not only does it provide the help required, but also gives a self-respecting satisfaction in accomplishment which can never attach to help that is received.

When a man is on his own, an individual responsible for himself, he must earn a character, a personal character, that is perhaps his first necessity; others must be made by experience of him to learn of his qualities, capabilities and perhaps defects and limitations. In a planned society he has no need of a character, no such thing is wanted. No national or universal plan can afford to take the least notice of personal character. He must also acquire credit, others must be made to know that he is credit worthy, can be trusted, that what he undertakes he will perform to the limits of his ability. But when he is planned, nothing so troublesome is in the least necessary. The individual must avoid loss, but if he is planned and loss comes out of the bottomless public purse, he is relieved of that necessity and can waste and lose just as much as his inherent indolence or energetic ineptitude may dictate.

THE individual responsible for himself must strive to do better, better than his previous performance and better than others; he must apply to the practical things of life the rules learnt on the playground at school. In a planned society, if the urge to move upward has not altogether disappeared, then the only move available to him is into the ranks of the planners where he can arrange the affairs of others and force them down deeper into the passivity of a planned existence.

Competition and the profit motive combine together to make the force of progress. Competition keeps the competitors in order, turns the avaricious and the greedy out of the market and forces the weak and inefficient out of the way of progress. Modern sentiment

would sacrifice progress in the interests of the weak and inefficient. One has only to apply such sentiment to sport, art, literature, or drama, to see quite clearly the effect of its application to trade and industry.

Against all this the Socialist professes to believe that the individual can be so trained as to cause his every act to be performed in the interests of society as a whole. His idea is to substitute for the enormous constructive natural power of the self-interest of each of us, a manufactured force composed of the theoretical interests of the State. To the individualist this means nonsense, a view much strengthened by the losses and disasters of the last five years.

PERHAPS, above all, I am an individualist because it makes for honesty. In a society of free men, each acting on his own responsibility, honesty, to put it on the lowest grounds, is the best policy. As we move further from the individualist position into associations, unions, districts, counties, nations and states, we tend to lose touch with that essentially personal quality, honesty. Honesty may be described as a force governing dealings between individuals. When the transactions are between masses, they tend to become less honest; when between nations, there is, indeed, little pretence of honesty about them.

Whatever the character of the Government when these lines appear in March, they may be helpful, in one case towards an understanding of the descent to still lower moral and material standards, or in another, and a happier, case towards a realization of the length of the hard road back to better days.

To W.F.B. — A DEAD POET

WHERE do you walk now, changeling ghost ?
Are you done with the dark edge of death ?
Are you journeying inland to join that host
That gave your beauty breath ?
Roland, Aucassin, Abelard . .
The children that made you their child ;
Who seeing you rage to reach their star
Caught up your spirit wild !

W. A. RATHKEY.

THE MYSTERY OF WANSDYKE

By ALFRED H. BURNE*

A GASH about seventy miles long, runs right across the face of Southern England. Few are even aware of its existence, and no man knows who made it, when, or why. Described as "the mysterious Wansdyke", it has aroused the curiosity of historians and archaeologists since ancient days, and many have been the speculations as to its meaning made by these people, from Leland onwards. But it remains, as Alban Major well says, "shrouded in mystery". I can trace at least eight different theories regarding its origin, and in this paper I purpose propounding a ninth.

Wansdyke is the name given to a bank, *vallum* or dyke that runs practically without a break from the Bristol Channel to Inkpen Beacon in Berkshire. Starting at Portishead on the Bristol Channel, it runs south-east for twenty map miles to the south of Bath. After circling the southern perimeter of this town as far as Bathampton, it takes an easterly course along the old Roman road, for thirteen miles, to the north of Devizes. Thence it follows the line of the Wiltshire Downs, passing to the south of Marlborough, through Savernake Forest as far as Chisbury Camp, a distance of fifteen map miles. The final section bends back in an east-south-easterly direction for eight miles to Inkpen Beacon. Only short sections of the dyke are visible in Savernake Forest, but over the remainder of its course it is fairly continuous for those who have eyes to see, while along the top of the Wiltshire Downs between Devizes and Marlborough only the blind could miss it. Here, for mile upon mile, it winds its gently sinuous way, observant of the contours, as every well-conducted military work should be. This section is most impressive and cannot have changed greatly during the many centuries that have elapsed since its construction.

I HAVE described the dyke as a bank—not a ditch, for that is the correct meaning of the word. But a bank usually presumes a ditch also, from which the soil for the bank is dug.

Wansdyke has a ditch, and the significant point about this ditch is that it lies on the northern side of the bank throughout its course. It can hardly be a coincidence that this should be so; it is evidence of consistent design—a military design. The dyke is in other words a barrier—not a mere boundary—a barrier against a potential enemy on its northern side. I do not fancy anyone nowadays disputes this proposition. It provides us with a base of operations, as it were, in our quest. We have to identify some ruler in the course of our history who governed or controlled the portion of England that lies to the south of a line running roughly from Bristol to Newbury, and who might be expected, in the nature of things, to construct such a dyke.

There are signs of difference in the detail of construction in various sectors of the line, and it is quite possible that in places short stretches of older works were utilized in the major work—we shall note the bearing of this later on—but the work as a whole is evidently the creation of one brain.

* * *

WE must now make a brief and rapid survey of our ancient history in our quest for this creator, noting the various theories put forward as the centuries roll by. First of all comes the pre-Roman period, that of the "Ancient Britons". The theory that

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Wansdyke was dug as a boundary between the Belgae and Ancient Britons, though once popular, has long been abandoned. It was killed by the investigations of General Pitt-Rivers, who in 1889 discovered by the spade that portions of the dyke are built upon a Roman road. From this he made the obvious deduction that the dyke must be later than the road, i.e., late Roman or post-Roman. I think the cautious general might have gone a stage further and limited it to post-Roman, for what Roman would construct a bank right on top of his own road? He would build it to the side—the enemy's side, leaving the road for lateral communication, like the lateral road along another Roman bank, Hadrian's Wall. If this is agreed it rules out the next two theories, namely that the Romans built it against incursions from the North either in 186 or 367.

This brings us to the departure of the Roman Legions and to the defence of the country by the Roman-British general Arthur, against the invaders from the east. Now if Arthur, or Ambrosius Aurelianus, had built such a defensive work it would presumably have faced east instead of north. Sir Charles Oman gets over this difficulty by suggesting that it formed the boundary between two Celtic tribes in the peaceful period between Arthur's great victory of Mount Badon in about 500, and the advance of Ceawlin about fifty years later. This he deduces from certain passages in Gildas, the almost contemporary British writer. Now, I have the greatest respect for Sir Charles as a military historian, and have learnt much from him, but I feel that in this case he has extracted from Gildas' few brief sentences more than they warrant. He has squeezed the juice out of the orange till almost "the pips squeak". I cannot believe that two native kings would spend so much trouble in marking out boundaries against one another at a time when the foreign invader was in possession of part of the land. This invader may have been badly winded after the Arthurian blow, but he might yet come up for the count. With Anglo-Saxon settlements already in South Hants and possibly in the Upper Thames Valley, the idea that the neighbouring British sub-kings should ignore such threats to their very existence does not make sense. I am not aware that any historian has accepted this theory of Sir Charles Oman. Moreover, was there sufficient coherence among the "conglomeration of, for the most part, insignificant kingdoms, whose small-minded rulers were solely concerned with petty schemes of aggrandizement" as Dayrell Reed describes England in those days. When the land was in such a condition it does not seem a likely period in which to construct an immense line across Southern England which would require even more men than the construction of the Great Pyramid. Moreover, during this period Cerdic, based on Hampshire and South Wilts would be threatening its rear. There is yet another objection, relating to parish boundaries that I will touch upon later.

As opposed to Oman's theory, some modern writers hold that Wansdyke was constructed about this time, but as a defence by the Britons against the invaders. Alban Major, who made an exhaustive survey of Wansdyke is representative of this view, though he states it with cautious reservations. The foregoing objections apply here also.

THE next school of thought regards the dyke as belonging to the era of the Saxon king Ceawlin (556–591), though as to whether it was built by the Britons against the Saxons or vice versa they are curiously at variance. The most popular book on this subject is *THE CONQUESTS OF CEAWLIN* by Major P. T. Godsal. In this book he asserts that Wansdyke was made by Ceawlin between 556 and 577, that is, in the midst of his victorious advance from the Thames to the Severn. What a peculiar time at which to devote resources and to deflect labour from the battle-line to the construction of a defensive work sited miles behind his frontier!

Moreover the western area covered by the dyke was not then in his possession. These seem sufficient reasons to put the suggestion out of court without invoking the argument of the parish boundaries. Major Godsal's bull-point is that the dyke was called Woden's Dyke from the start, and as Woden was a pagan god it must have been made in pagan times. But was it thus known at the start? All we know for certain is that in 903 a portion of it was so known: that is four centuries later, by which time a mistaken origin might well become attached to it, in the absence of written records. Alternatively, there may have been one or more short lengths of dyke of pagan origin which were utilized in the construction of the work in Christian times. (Alban Major has established that Wansdyke was in its origin a composite work.)

Diametrically opposed to Major Godsal's theory is that of those who allot it to the same period but assert that it was built by the Britons against the Saxons to the north of them. In the one case the Saxons are placed to the south of the dyke, in the second to the north. This illustrates the obscurity of the history of that period. Neither theory will hold water, for Ceawlin's advance was from the Thames in a westerly direction, and it would be futile for the Britons to seek to oppose the invaders by constructing a line parallel to the line of the hostile advance: the Saxons could render the whole system valueless by advancing from the Lower Thames along the south face of the dyke instead of along the northern face, thus turning it. There were also the Southampton invaders to be watched. Once again the parish boundary argument is against this theory, and it is time to examine this argument.

IN 1904, the Rev. C. S. Taylor pointed out that the existing parish boundaries ignore Wansdyke, except where they run along the Roman road. This seems fairly conclusive evidence that the parish boundaries were fixed before Wansdyke was made, for it is almost inconceivable that they would not have taken advantage of such a good landmark as the dyke, especially where it runs along the top of the Wiltshire Downs, which in themselves form a rough dividing line between the parishes. The very fact that the parish boundary follows the Roman road shows that advantage was taken of any existing landmark when the boundaries were fixed. This consideration runs counter to Alban Major's theory of early construction. And his method of explaining it away does not seem very clear or convincing.

Taylor held that the dyke was constructed by Cenwahl, King of Wessex, between 648 and 652. Objections to this are that: (1) Bede does not mention it; if such an important work were constructed within fifty years of his own time the great historian would scarcely have passed it over in silence; (2) Parish boundaries were probably not then in existence; (3) Cenwahl was hardly the King, nor was Wessex at that period the country, to produce such a comprehensive and united work; there was then little internal coherence in Wessex, and the numerous sub-kings would have been unlikely to combine in such a work.

The parish boundary argument was taken up quite recently by Mr. Shaw Mellor in the *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine* for 1945. He thinks the parish boundaries were started at the end of the seventh century. He does not commit himself to a definite date, but he quotes with apparent approval Pitt-Rivers' suggestion that it is possible that Wansdyke was a boundary thrown up by the West Saxons as a defence against Offa, King of Mercia, in the eighth century. But Pitt-Rivers made so many suggestions, none of which he would sponsor himself, that this suggestion of his has probably not received the attention it deserves.

* * *

BY this time the reader will perhaps be exclaiming "It is all very easy to pour destructive criticism on the various theories that account for Wansdyke, but there must

be *some* explanation for it; the thing exists; if it was not made at any of the epochs suggested above, then how came it and when?" When studying the problem myself I felt much the same. This merely made me the more anxious to solve it, for after all, Wansdyke exists; the fact cannot be gainsaid. It was a chance reference, in a book, to Offa's Dyke that set me thinking. Was there any similarity or relation between the two? Though I did not know it at the time, John Aubrey, three hundred years ago, had asked himself the same question. Now Sir Cyril Fox made an extensive survey of Offa's Dyke twenty years ago, and so I examined his writings on the subject with interest. I was at once struck by the following points of similarity between the two dykes. (1) They possess a generic similarity, being of great length, with flanks resting on natural obstacles—Offa's Dyke, the Irish Sea and the Bristol Channel—Wansdyke the Bristol Channel and Inkpen Beacon. (2) There is a similar wideness of conception and unity of purpose about them which indicate that they must each be the handiwork of a great mind and personality. (3) Their general form of construction is the same—a *vallum* with a ditch always on the same side. (4) Each exhibits a variety, within these general limits, of details of construction. (5) There is evidence that each was constructed by sectors, each sector being on a tolerably straight line, and the junction between contiguous sectors not always being clean.

There is no space in which to develop these arguments; I confine myself to the mere assertion that it is so. The similarities point to the likelihood (I will not put it stronger) that the two dykes are fairly contemporaneous. My next step was to examine the inter-state situation at the time Offa's Dyke was built, to see if it would support this supposition.

FOR the benefit of those readers whose early English history has become rusty I will here make a small historical digression. King Offa reigned over Mercia from 758 to 796. During his reign Mercia was the dominant power in England. Offa enlarged his boundaries in all directions, and in or about 784 he constructed the dyke that bears his name, running from the mouth of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye, as a barrier-boundary between his dominions and Wales. In 777 he had driven Cynewulf, King of Wessex, south of the Thames in a battle fought at Bensington near Wallingford, having already subdued the sub-kingdom of Kent. Wessex was then left in peace by Offa whilst he turned his attention to his Welsh opponents. So far historical facts; now for the first time I enter the land of speculation, and I shall use the indicative rather than the subjunctive in relating what I picture to have happened.

It is the year 784. Cynewulf of Wessex is eyeing closely the doings of Offa his rival. The latter has been at war with the Welsh ever since his victory over Wessex seven years ago. Presently rumours begin to seep across the border to Cynewulf that Offa, having come to terms with the Welsh, is building a stupendous military work all along his Welsh frontier. Enemies of one country may be accounted friends of one another. Wales and Wessex come under this category (just as England and Russia did in 1941). Welsh mariners bring Cynewulf word that confirms the rumours, and they give a description of the great dyke that Offa is constructing, together with the ominous warning that it may only be the prelude to another attack by Offa on his old foe Wessex. No centrally situated power courts a war on two fronts. Offa's motto evidently is "One foe at a time". If he can make his western frontier secure he can return with an easy mind against his southern enemy. Forewarned is forearmed; Cynewulf decides to copy the action of Offa while yet there is time. (The military thought and procedure of the dominant military power is always copied by its neighbours, as was notably the case regarding Germany after the Franco-Prussian War.) Cynewulf therefore sets to work feverishly to make a prototype of the

"Maginot Line" well inside but parallel to his northern frontier (again like the French). Like Offa he can anchor it on the sea on one flank, but on the other he must be content to "refuse the flank" slightly and rest it upon the great massif of Inkpen Beacon. Thence to the south-east his frontier is no longer contiguous with that of Mercia, albeit Surrey and Kent are now vaguely subordinated to Offa. That at any rate is the best Cynewulf can do, and he hastens to put his project into effect. Thus we see the two dykes being traced out and dug almost simultaneously, the Northern one having a few months lead.

* * *

SUCH in brief is my reconstruction of the origin of Wansdyke. Is there any event in the subsequent history of Wessex that lends countenance to it? I think there is.

Within twenty years of the construction of the Dyke, Egbert, the founder of our Royal House, came to the throne of Wessex. Wansdyke was then almost brand new; it had been built during Egbert's lifetime; he may indeed have assisted in the work, and the new king would take care to maintain it in good order so long as there remained any potential danger on the side of Mercia. For twenty years there was peace between the two countries; and then Egbert did a thing which would seem incomprehensible were it not for the existence of Wansdyke. Though Beornwulf, King of Mercia, had an army in being, and was still the paramount military power in England, Egbert, ignoring the danger from the north, took his own army to attack the Britons in Cornwall, thus apparently leaving his own frontier open to attack by Beornwulf. How could Egbert afford to take such a risk? Wansdyke seems to be the answer. If it was still in good repair and if he left a garrison—even a skeleton one—to hold it, Beornwulf might be discouraged from attacking it during the absence of the main Wessex army. Whatever the reason, Beornwulf did not attack, though he kept his own army within striking distance of the frontier while Egbert was subduing the enemy in East Cornwall. The presence of the Mercian army in a menacing position near the frontier probably shortened Egbert's campaign in the west; he hurried back, probably via Bath, Devizes and Avebury, picking up the garrisons of Wansdyke as he passed along it. Beornwulf was now near Swindon, and Egbert came upon him near Wroughton. Here was fought the decisive battle of Ellandun, a battle that finally decided the long contest for pre-eminence between Mercia and Wessex in favour of the latter. The Kings of Wessex thus became the Kings of England, and their descendants still sit upon its throne.

Thus Wansdyke can be claimed to have played a prominent part in the shaping of affairs in the critical years that decided the future of England and gave us what is now the Royal House of Windsor.

* * *

TWO objections may be raised against the foregoing reconstruction. How did the dyke come to be connected with the pagan Woden if its creator was the Christian Cynewulf? And why did not Asser mention the fact, considering that he mentioned the contemporary creation of Offa's Dyke? Asser was a Welshman, brought up in Wales. He would be bound to be aware of the existence of Offa's Dyke which was still the boundary between the two countries. But after Ellandun the rapid enlargement of the bounds of Wessex left Wansdyke far in rear of the frontier, like seaweed left high and dry behind the receding tide. Its *raison d'être* would be gone, and it would fall into disrepair. The century that followed the death of Bede in 731 was one of the bleakest in our historical annals:* there was no contemporary or near contemporary chronicler, and by the time that one arose in the person of Asser a century later no written record of the origin of Wansdyke existed. Small wonder

*The period 768-814 is described by Professor Chambers as "one of the most obscure periods of English history".

then that the explanation of it was lost, and that it came to be attributed to Pagan times and origin especially if portions of pagan works were incorporated in it. Errors get passed down from mouth to mouth—even among historians—and, if my reconstruction has substance, it seems high time that this particular error was unmasked and that Wansdyke, "this mighty bulwark," should be brought back into its rightful place in our Island story.

High up on the presbytery wall of Winchester Cathedral stands a mortuary chest containing the bones of two Saxon Kings, and their names—believe it or not—are Cynewulf and Egbert. The inscription on the chest runs:

"HIC REX EGBERTUS PAUSAT CUM REGE KENULPHO."

To it I should like to add:

"WODENSDICIS CREATOR ET OCCUPATOR."

TRANSFIGURATION

BEYOND the peril of time's farthest shoal,
Where time itself dissolves in golden splendour,
There lies a region where the martyred soul
May bask in sunlit calm and blithe surrender
Of all that inwardly had darkened grace
Benighting long the mortal urge for free
Communion with the Godhead face to face . . .
Where all is blent in one immune felicity.

Released from earth's enigma and distress,
From fast-imprisoned hope and scourging woe,
Shall life-in-death assuage the bitter press
Of thorny crown, of piercéd side, and so
Unveil the final answer that must greet
The way of pain, the wherefore of defeat.

MAURICE BURKE.

STATE CONTROL OF AGRICULTURE

By A. G. STREET*

IT is generally admitted that state control of agriculture in Britain did a good job during the war years. It worked on the lines that desperate measures required desperate remedies; for, while the submarine campaign in the Atlantic was at its height, nothing mattered except the greatest possible increase in home-produced food in the least possible time. Therefore, during that period of our history, people who stood in the way received short shrift. These victims were a very small minority of the farming population; but, in order to illustrate just how un-British and undemocratic was the treatment they received, one example will serve.

It concerns a farmer named George Raymond Walden, of Borough Farm, Itchen Stoke, Hampshire. In 1940 he was a bachelor of sixty-two, who had lived nearly all his life at Borough Farm, which his father had farmed before him. He was neither traitor nor enemy alien. He was merely a rather old-fashioned farmer, who had somehow farmed well enough between the two world wars to remain solvent, and be still farming in September, 1939. It is surely to his credit to have accomplished that during a serious agricultural depression, *without the aid, advice, or orders of any Government Committee.*

NOW for some relevant dates in his case. The Second World War broke out on September 3rd, 1939. About seven months later, on April 17th, 1940, the Hampshire War Agricultural Committee ordered Mr. Walden to plough up approximately four acres of permanent pasture, and to summer-fallow this land in preparation for sowing wheat the following autumn. Mr. Walden refused to obey this order; and accordingly, on June 20th, about two months later, that same authority ordered him to quit his farm and home. A month later, on July 20th, notice of intention to evict him was given. And two days later—think of it, only two days later—that eviction was carried out by armed force.

Being denied any appeal to Common Law against this sentence, Mr. Walden barricaded himself in his farmhouse, and defied the police to evict him. Not until the siege had continued for eighteen hours, and tear gas bombs had been thrown into the farmhouse at midnight, were the police able to force an entry into his home, and wound him so severely with a shot gun that he died shortly afterwards in the Hampshire Royal County Hospital in Winchester.

NO blame can be attached to the police for this occurrence. They were merely doing their duty as ordered, and several of them were wounded in the discharge of it. Moreover, from the moment Mr. Walden resisted eviction and shot at the police who were trying to carry it out, he became a common criminal. Therefore, the verdict of "justifiable homicide" at the subsequent inquest on his death was a correct one. In his summing up the coroner said that the case "had aroused some notoriety, but when one came to boil it down there was really very little in it".

There must be differing opinions about that. For instance, one cannot help wondering whether the coroner's valuation would have been the same, much less phrased in the same

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words, had the victim of such swift and awful punishment been a miner, a docker, or a member of any of the big trade unions. Again, after making due allowance for the probability that Mr. Walden was foolish, obstinate, and non-co-operative, and also that he must have been badly handled by the people responsible for the state control of farming in that area, short notice forcible eviction from both farm and home was surely a very harsh penalty for the awful crime of refusing to plough up four acres of grassland.

AT that date even murderers, after conviction in open court by a jury, had the right to appeal to an unbiased tribunal. This right being denied to a British farmer, he had no alternative but to fight Nazi methods in Hampshire as stoutly as younger Britons were fighting them overseas. Somehow, it is difficult to blame him over much. The real blame for his martyrdom lies with those responsible for the administration of the war-time state control of farming at that date, principally with his farmer neighbours. Some of these were on the local committee that issued the instructions that ultimately led to his death; while the others stood by and let this dreadful thing happen without making any effort to prevent it. To the lasting shame of British farmers in general and Hampshire farmers in particular history will show that not one farmer fought alongside George Raymond Walden in his hour of need.

Apparently he died in vain; for, soon after the war ended, state control of farming in Britain was made a permanent thing in the national life by the passing of the Agriculture Act. Admittedly under it this control is less peremptory than its war-time predecessor in the matter of evicting farmers who refuse to obey its orders; but it still *denies them the right of appeal to an open court*. What seems inexplicable is that all political parties agreed to this, the largest and most objectionable defect of many in the present system of state control of agriculture.

AT the end of the war there was a widespread and genuine feeling that some form of permanent control of farming was necessary. No one, either in town or countryside, was willing to tolerate the misuse and neglect of Britain's most valuable national asset, her farming land. Moreover, it was a sound business proposition to argue that, if the State was going to guarantee all farmers and farm-workers an adequate income by the regulation of prices for homegrown food, it must at the same time take steps to ensure that in return the nation could count on high production, the maintenance of land fertility, and efficiency in farming. So, under the Agriculture Act, 1947, State Control of Agriculture, was made permanent.

British farmers accepted this legislation gladly. Contrary to the popular notion, it is townsfolk who are the romantics, while the great majority of countryfolk are frank materialists. Farmers especially come into the latter category. Such are the dictates of their calling that they have no alternative. Besides, the memory of the bad times between the wars was so vivid and painful that most of them were willing, even eager, to give up liberty, democracy, and any of the non-material decencies of human life, even to permit their neighbours to be evicted and legally murdered, always provided they received sufficient material benefits in return.

There was no doubt that the new control did grant them, on paper anyway, not merely a good chance, but rather a certainty of making money in the immediate future. Under it they were to be guaranteed prices for their main products at a sufficiently high level to enable them to pay state-controlled costs of production and make good profits, and in addition what seemed to be absolute security of tenure for the tenant farmer.

WHETHER the price guarantee will ever or can ever be implemented by any government of any party in the event of a flood of imported food at ruinously low prices has yet to be proved. It is one thing

for a government to control farmers' prices at a level often below market price, but very definitely another for it to control them at a higher level than market price in a country in which ninety per cent of the voting power lies in the hands of town workers and food consumers. However, to date the guaranteed prices portion of the Agriculture Act has been fairly administered and therefore, the present state control of farming cannot be convicted of bad faith until failure to do the same in the face of a world glut of food shall prove it guilty.

Curiously enough, the increased security of tenure under this legislation has not worked out quite as farmers expected. For any farmer suddenly to be given the freehold of his farm without paying for it seems unjustifiable; but to-day the tenant farmer, unless he can be convicted of rank bad farming, enjoys this, or at any rate for his lifetime. In consequence, farming, especially tenant farming, is now practically a closed shop. There is no free trade, almost no trade whatsoever in rented farms. To-day the farmer's son who has, or can command, say ten thousand pounds farming capital, has no more chance of renting a suitable holding than an eighteen handicap man has of going round St. Andrews in par figures. Farms with vacant possession make fabulous prices when offered for sale; and, when any tenant farmer dies on a big estate, it is no exaggeration to say that there is a queue of his neighbours outside the estate office long before his body is cold.

WHAT this really means is that generally speaking, those who were already farming at the end of the war, if they are alive, are still farming to-day, and on a good wicket—not only the efficient but also the inefficient. The coming of war in 1939 granted a new financial lease of life to all the duds in farming, and since the war world food shortage plus state control has renewed this. Indeed, whilst no one in farming wants to see a bad slump in its prosperity, an increasing number of landowners, farmers, and farm workers are realizing that under the present system of state control nothing but a slump can ever push out the duds, restore free trade in rented farms, and bring about a marked and much needed improvement in general efficiency. Already town critics are saying and with some justification, that while the cut and thrust of free competition did and would again bring bankruptcy as a punishment for inefficiency, financial stability and security of tenure under state control tend to bring about an amount of stagnation and complacency that the nation can ill afford.

Since the war and the establishment of state control on a peace-time footing there is no doubt that the agricultural committee system has lost a lot of ground. Minus the power to direct cropping and faced with an ever-increasing supply of goods, this was inevitable Even during the war years it was largely the county committees' control over scarce commodities that made their influence so powerful with every type of farmer. Farmers may, and did then with extremely good grace, accept advice from a committee that carried with it a permit to purchase an otherwise unprocurable machine, or the hope of some modification of a cropping order. But, as might have been expected, now that farmers can for the most part buy what, when, and where they like, they no longer automatically seek advice from committees, and indeed naturally resent this when it is offered unasked.

IN short, to-day nobody in the countryside is happy about the agricultural committees. As their direct authority diminished, so has the indirect. The efficient farmers ignore and resent them; the duds toady to them in public, and try to dodge their instructions in private; while the only farming supporters of them are those farmers who serve on them. There is no doubt that most countrymen appreciated and valued the good work done by their brother farmers on these committees during the war; when these men neglected

their own interests to help others, with no N.A.A.S. to help them, and with no past history of the job to guide them. But to-day the war incentive is missing for both governors and governed; so much so that some of the farmers on these committees now openly demand more power over their neighbours, direction of cropping, allocation of supplies, and all the rest; while others, the really efficient farmers, state in public that they would have preferred the Women's Land Army to have been kept in being, and the agricultural committees to be scrapped forthwith.

Is there a middle course ? The Minister of Agriculture in the last parliament recognized that all was far from well, and appointed a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the whole system. Here are some of the main causes of the present increasing resentment and irritation which the Committee should examine.

THE major one is, of course, that although the present system of control is slightly more democratic than the war-time one, it is still far too fascist in its nature and constitution. The members of agricultural committees are not elected but appointed. As a sop to democracy, the Minister of Agriculture appoints some of them from nominations sent in by the Central Landowners' Association, the National Farmers' Union, the National Union of Agricultural Workers, and the County Councils, all representative bodies of important sections of the rural population. On paper there seems little to cavil at in that method of selection; but in practice it works out that the Minister appoints only those people whom in his view will be more or less yes-men. Indeed, there have been numerous instances of him completely flouting the wishes of a responsible body of country opinion.

For a recent example, here is a newspaper report dated November 25th, 1949 :—

"After Kesteven County Council had nominated Lt.-Col. M. T. Chambers, Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, to represent the Council on the Ministry's Agricultural Executive Committee, the Council chairman, Ald. Sir Robert Pattinson, received a personal letter from the Minister stating that his choice was Councillor Fitzherbert Wright.

When Sir Robert revealed this to the County Council last week, he said he had nothing to say against Councillor Fitzherbert Wright, except that he was an engineer by profession and the man the council had selected was chairman of the Agricultural Committee.

They would have to accept the Minister's recommendation.

The Selection Committee said, in their report, that the practice adopted by the Minister in appointing a member, and then seeking the approval of the Council for his action, ' was most unfortunate'."

If that is not fascism, what is it ?

AGAIN, once a County Committee has been appointed, it is permitted to appoint a district sub-committee to administer the details of state control in a certain area. Accordingly it appoints a District Chairman, who, apparently, now selects the requisite number of farmers in that district to serve on his committee ; and as might be expected, his list of names is usually passed *en bloc* by the County Committee. In effect this means that the District Chairman selects his boy-friends who in his view will do the job adequately and at the same time provide him with no opposition.

Is that democracy ?

Anyway, no matter what its rightful name, under this system there seems to be no way of farmers getting unsuitable committee men replaced by more suitable ones. For instance, to-day in spite of the drive for the elimination of tuberculosis in our dairy herds, there are numerous instances of farmer members of these committees, who cannot be bothered or at any rate who don't produce T.T. milk from their own herds. Yet in a dairying district

these out-of-date milk producers remain in authority over their neighbours, who have gone to great expense and worry to produce the safest possible milk. Does this mean that the Minister of Agriculture considers servile obedience from committee members to be more important than the health and safety of Britain's babies? Anyway, the truth is that he permits these old-fashioned dairy farmers to hang on and on and on, exulting in the knowledge that their more efficient neighbours can do nothing to get them out of office.

HERE in all fairness it must be stated that there is no general resentment at the way in which the paid officials of these committees discharge their duties. At very reasonable salaries these men do their job efficiently and well. Often they have to play the triple rôle of welfare officer, policeman, and probation officer, a seemingly impossible task which in most cases is performed to the general satisfaction of the countryside. Very definitely it is not the paid officials, but the farmer members of these committees who are the cause of the present unrest in rural districts. Under the present fascist system of appointment these men are too frequently what may be termed aged professional committee-men who revel in the importance of their office; instead of being drawn from the leaders of agricultural thought and practice, and men young enough to rebel when necessary against the inhuman machinery of state control.

It becomes increasingly puzzling why responsible farmers continue to accept office on these committees, for the terms of appointment under the Agriculture Act are frankly degrading, being that such appointed members *shall comply with any directions* given by the Minister of Agriculture. One wonders how long it will be before the agricultural journalist is required by law to write only as the Minister of Agriculture directs. Presumably that may not be so very far away.

WHY have so many of the yeomen of Britain now become the yes-men of Britain? Physical slavery is now generally considered repulsive; but servility of spirit in our countryside is now being eagerly accepted. The conquered slave of years ago justly claims sympathy, for he had no alternative; the voluntary slave of to-day is a creature beneath contempt.

Of course, it is the lust for an enjoyment of power that compensates farmer members of these committees for accepting office as yes-men. As committee members such men did their duty to their country during the war, in the same way that younger men did theirs in the fighting services. But here is the difference: While the younger men did their war-time duty hating and loathing every moment of it, the farmers on agricultural committees did theirs loving and revelling in every moment of it. Moreover, when the war finished the great majority of the younger men pulled every string possible to obtain an early discharge from the services, and to get back to more wholesome employment. But there were scarcely any committee men who were anxious to be demobbed, in fact less than decimal one per cent. Instead they hung on to their power, and gave thanks when it was made permanent in peace. Which is perhaps understandable. When age and infirmity deny further enjoyment of the lusts of the flesh, it must be great sport to have the right to interfere in one's neighbours' businesses, without, be it noted, either electoral or financial responsibility.

IN consequence, the agricultural committees to-day are largely in the hands of great age, sometimes of senility; for its leading members can, and in the great majority of cases do, hang on to office until it pleases them to resign or death takes them. Anyway, under the present system the people whom they govern have no way of replacing them with younger and better men. Yet often such men are frankly too old to want to make any more money, to be really efficient up-to-date

farmers, or even to go to the bother of producing T.T. milk; and many of them would gladly pay a stiffish annual sum of money in order to be permitted to continue to enjoy the one pleasure life still holds for them.

Which is admittedly a bad thing; for no industry can keep pace with modern times as long as its government and leadership is mainly in the hands of the over-seventies. Granted, there are some cases where a man of that age is definitely the best man for the job, but only free and democratic election can justly place him in such high office over his fellows. So, if this frankly fascist system of appointment is to be continued in state control of farming, it is to be hoped that the Minister's Committee of Inquiry will at least recommend an age limit.

IN support of that suggestion here is a copy of a notice sent out by the Ministry of Agriculture last autumn:—

> "The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries has appointed Mr. A. R. A. Weston, C.B.E. (Assistant Solicitor), to be the Legal Adviser and Solicitor to the Ministry in succession to Sir Denys Stocks, C.B., O.B.E., who will retire from the public service on December 2nd, 1949, on reaching the age of 65."

Surely if the Legal Adviser and Solicitor to the Ministry of Agriculture must automatically retire on reaching the age of sixty-five, members of the agricultural committees of the same Ministry should be subject to the same ruling? The point is that like Sir Denys Stocks they are appointed, not elected. Moreover, it should always be remembered that the farmer members of these committees are engaged for profit in the same business as those whom they govern, a state of things that can never be wholeheartedly commended. Even so, compulsory retirement from such committees at the age of sixty-five would have a marked effect on the way in which the state control of farming was administered by these appointed rulers. The knowledge that during the latter years of their farming careers they would have to suffer such control instead of administering it, would provide a salutary check on their activities when in office themselves.

BUT a far better way of removing the widespread resentment against the present system would be to abolish these appointed agricultural committees, and to place the administration of whatever state control of farming the nation considers desirable in the hands of the County Councils. There seem to be two good reasons for this change. Firstly, because while County Councils are not perfect, one never hears the bitter grouses against them that are to-day so prevalent throughout farming Britain against the present agricultural committees. The reason, of course, is because the members of County Councils are elected, not appointed.

Were the present committees to disappear in favour of county councils, in a good many cases the same men would be doing the same work in agricultural control as they are now doing, as many county councillors also serve on agricultural committees. The difference would be that as county councillors they would have to face their constituents at stated periods, thus being subject to public pressure, a wonderful safeguard against bad government.

The second reason in favour of county councils taking over the present work of agricultural committees is that there is far too much government of farming to-day. County Councils, Agricultural Committees, the N.A.A.S., and so forth are all treading on one another's heels, with overlapping that is not only unnecessarily expensive but also inefficient because of it.

MOREOVER, to-day there is nothing like as much work in agricultural control as there was during war-time, several years of peace having greatly reduced its commitments. Allocation of new machinery has practically disappeared. Lands in hand are much less, and should quickly disappear,

as to-day any land worth farming will find plenty of would-be tenants; while expensive but necessary reclamation of unprofitable land could be and should be the province of the N.A.A.S. Machinery for hire could and should be left to private enterprise or co-operation between small farmers. The collection of information concerning number of cottages, water supplies and so forth, the still necessary issuing of permits to purchase this or that, the allocation of imported feeding stuffs, and such like, could all be done quite adequately by county council committees. So, too, with the N.A.A.S. under their jurisdiction, could the only really valuable work of state control of farming that remains—the prevention of bad farming and the setting of targets or even direction of cropping in accordance with the national needs.

But no matter what methods be used to effect it, there are two objectionable features of the present system that are crying out for alterations. One is that the agricultural committees shall bear the necessary electoral responsibility; the other that no British farmer shall continue to be liable to eviction from his farm and home, being denied the right of appeal to open court. Until those two amendments are made in the state control of farming, there will be and can be no real decency in our country life.

TO-DAY, while freedom has disappeared, it must be admitted that by comparison with the inter-war period there is much greater material prosperity in the countryside. All classes of country folk are better off, and the land is better farmed. Fascism can always claim material efficiency for a short period—even Mussolini made the Italian trains run on time—but it has no lasting quality.

After the war British farmers were guilty of being twentieth-century Judases; for by their meek acceptance of the Agriculture Act they betrayed Britain's country life for the modern equivalent of the biblical thirty pieces of silver. Since then this evil fascist system has taught them to think and to believe that sufficient for the countryman's day is the material gain thereof. They now have no purpose save to obtain sufficient material gain from the countryside to enable them to spend their leisure elsewhere. At every financial level the great majority of them flee the countryside, the moment work is over; and the village is now mainly a place for bed and breakfast. So to-day, although country life is materially prosperous it is true to say that the soul has gone out of it. Its machinery works, but nobody trusts or loves it any more.

Theatre
"HAMLET" *and* CHRISTOPHER FRY

By HUBERT GRIFFITH

HAMLET. By Shakespeare. *New Theatre* (Old Vic Company).

VENUS OBSERVED. By Christopher Fry. *St. James'*.

RING ROUND THE MOON. By Christopher Fry (from the French). *Globe.*

THE NON-RESIDENT. By Frank Harvey. *Phoenix.*

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS. By A. W. Pinero. *Saville.*

A NEW *Hamlet* production by the Old Vic Company is a serious event, and I propose to treat it with all the sincerity with which I am capable. (Some fiend—probably Anatole France—has muttered, "One cannot be entirely sincere without being a bit of a bore". Well—let boredom thrive!)

The production is a worthy one in almost every possible way. It represents exactly the type of work that the Old Vic should be doing, accepting the Old Vic as being in the running as basis for any sort of National Theatre that may ultimately emerge.

The transcription is as comprehensive as any that may be given in just over three hours of playing time. (Oddly enough, the shortest *Hamlet* I ever saw was the full five-hour *Hamlet* at the former Old Vic in the Waterloo Road many years ago. There, there was time to explain everything, Hamlet's adventures in England and so forth, and all sorts of twists and turns of the plot that had always seemed, and still seem in any "cut" version, slightly lunatic. So fascinating did the whole narrative become that the curtain seemed to be down as soon as it was up, and one had had one's whole immense evening of drama without even the tedium caused by a bad farce.)

The present version is cut intelligently, and remains dramatic. The flamboyant red-headed Queen of Miss Wanda Rotha is a great success—the pivot-point, as she should be, of the drama. It has been objected that she looks amost as young as her son, Hamlet. But this is fair and legitimate. After all, Queen Gertrude must have been a remarkable woman, or her brother-in-law would not have been driven (she fully in middle-age) to committing murder for the sake of possessing her. Further, Miss Wanda Rotha is one of the few foreign actresses resident on our shores who has bothered to teach herself correct English speech, and for this I admire and respect her. If I knew a more suitable English actress to nominate for the part I would do so. But I don't.

Everybody in the cast seemed to be talking about the events and happenings of the play as though they were actually happening or about to happen—which, in normal Shakespearean productions, is a comparative novelty. It applied even to the Soldiers, on the curtain-rise, discussing the appearance of the Ghost. They didn't entirely believe in him. They didn't *want* to believe in him. But there he was, or had been—and one was infected with something of their uncomfortable apprehension.

The Ghost, when he appeared (Mr. Wilfrid Walter) justified this apprehension. He brought something of the bleak supernatural world with him. The Polonius of Mr. Walter Hudd was not completely a bore and a driveller. He suggested that many years ago, and when on top of his form, he might have been competent to hold down the job of chief Counsellor of State to the Court of Denmark. The King Claudius of Mr. Mark Dignam was not merely the demon-king of pantomime, but a man of parts and personality. And all these things helped immeasurably to the build-up of the great design. I congratulate Mr. Hugh Hunt, the director, for a great deal of this, in his casting and his

supervision. If I say that it is a good Students' *Hamlet*, I mean this in the best sense. It is a performance to which one would be pleased to take any young student who had not seen a dozen versions of the play already. They would get a fair view.

I see that I am forgetting the principals, the Hamlet and the Ophelia.

This is to some extent defensive reflex as regards Mr. Michael Redgrave, the Hamlet; for I don't know, and cannot work it out in my own mind, how far it is fair to compare the good with the better. Years ago again, I saw Mr. Ernest Milton play Hamlet, again at the Old Vic. It was when they were rushing through a new production under Mr. Robert Atkins every two weeks or so, against time; and Mr. Milton simply had no scope for the arpeggios and cadenzas that he habitually indulges in whenever he gets on his own—whenever he becomes his own producer and director. Under Mr. Robert Atkins he simply had to act. And, drawing from the fires of his own nature, and the force of the poetry within him, he acted Shakespeare superbly.

I can still hear the tones of his uttering the marvellous simile:

"*Hyperion to a satyr!*"—

Milton saying the word "Hyperion" as though a god had suddenly appeared to him in glory; the long digression about "this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire. . . ." It made all subsequent Hamlets, and I include among them John Barrymore's and Mr. John Gielgud's, seem—if not juvenile—at least not worth doing. But how fair is it to impose all this load of reminiscence of loveliness on the head of the present heir to the Crown of Denmark, of Mr. Michael Redgrave? It probably isn't fair. How can more than one actor in a generation hope to fill out a part that is within an evening the complete "Renaissance man"—the man who, after the period of high adventure is over, has now become the contemplative man of the decadence, the man into whom "the soul with all its maladies has entered"?—the man, not in love with life but with death? Well—Mr. Redgrave makes an honest and dignified and accomplished shot at it. I cannot say better. And he props up the centre of the play.

Of Miss Yvonne Mitchell I cannot say so much. She is killed stone dead by her bonnet—far more so than by any formal act of drowning. What possessed the designer, Mr. Laurence Irving, who has otherwise done a workmanlike job, to put her in a Kate Greenaway poke-bonnet? Admittedly he *may* have found some old print or some woodcut after Holbein to suggest that poke-bonnets were in fashion at Court in the sixteenth century. But for all that, the audience was muttering to itself "Kate Greenaway", and I defy the ghost of Duse to have played the part of Ophelia in that hat. When she got it off, and sang the mad song wildly out of tune she was much better. But I suggest that the sooner some assistant stage manager inadvertently puts his or her foot through that bonnet the better.

MR. CHRISTOPHER FRY, in his present stage of development, defeats me. I have seen three of his plays in the month under review, a one-acter, *The Boy With a Cart* at the Lyric, Hammersmith; *Venus Observed*, the opening of Sir Laurence Olivier's management at the St. James'; and *Ring Round the Moon*, an adaptation from the French of M. Jean Anouilh, at the Globe.

Not only can I not tell you what any of these plays was about, but I defy any of my contemporary critics to tell you what they were about. (They have all most dexterously skirted the issue.)

A previous play of Mr. Christopher Fry, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, I do know what it was about. It was about a lady who is shortly to be burned at the stake. I know that it is only intended to be "funny"—and that at the end she does not finally get burned. But I could not, for the life of me, see anything funny in the initial thesis—and so the play fell on me flat. I think it is possible that (comparatively) young Mr. Fry (he is more than forty), has great gifts of poetry to bring

to our comparatively drab modern theatre. But he has a talent for tossing words into the air—making a pun on them—and then making another pun—in short:—

"*One whom the magic of his own vain tongue*
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony. . . ."

that makes me absolutely dizzy with his sentences. I would have a bet with any of my readers that all of Mr. Christopher Fry's works up to date will be forgotten from the mind of man in a decade. But it is at least possible that he has it in him to write many better ones.

PINERO'S early farce *The Schoolmistress* (Saville) goes to show what care and devotion could be given to the construction of a farce in the 'eighties. Not worth it, you say? But go and see the gales of happy laughter that come across the footlights at the Saville! A point mentioned in the First Act bounces back, at compound interest, in the Third. It is indeed a mathematician at work. It is in itself a demonstration of why the craft of playwriting was thought such a "mystery" in those days. Why one had to be apprenticed to it for so many years before one could even write a one-act curtain-raiser. Nowadays, a man who may have never had a play produced before, and has served no stage-apprenticeship at all, may suddenly dash off a mild little comedy such as *Worm's Eye View* and find it running to beat all records. I thoroughly approve of this. The play in question, the *Worm's Eye View*, is about Blackpool boarding houses, the squalid little tragedies and the amusing little farces that occurred in them during their occupation, as billettees, by the R.A.F. I, too, took part in this life during a few sickly months of my Service and can accurately identify every type, from landlady down to A.C. 2., and delight in the justice and humour with which the author has drawn them. I notice with pleasure that it now has "5th Year" after it in the Theatre Columns. But in the case of Pinero one salutes the work of the master. It is like the feel of a pair of shoes built to order by a crack Burlington Arcade firm, as compared with an honest pair of utility brogues.

I HAVE to record a mild tragedy, the withdrawing of a new play, *The Non-Resident*, from the Phoenix, after a run of only three nights. Personally, I found it one of the most interesting new plays that has come my way for many months past. Mr. Frank Harvey has set his scene in a country guest house—something less that a luxury hotel, something more than an ordinary boarding house. There go the retired Majors, axed after a life-time in the Army, the spinsters who have known better days and aristocratic connections, but who still have enough money to support modest gentility. Quite naturally they support their morale by endless boasting of past triumphs to one another—the Major, according to himself, has been the most popular man in his regiment; the fading lady remembers when her family gave parties that half the County were delighted to attend. They all know one another's stories, backwards and by heart, before ever a lip is opened. It is a study of the "*récherche du temps perdu*", with a good deal of delicacy and poignancy thrown in.

I suppose it failed because it was broken-backed. The evening is really made-up of three separate one-act plays, only linked by the thin strand of the characters participating, at different stages of their development, and sometimes as different people altogether. That superb character-actor Mr. Gordon Harker has to be in turn a commercial traveller, a butler, a detective, and an Army Batman. Mr. Francis Lister is extremely moving as the failure Army Major, consoling himself with the memory of the triumphs that he has never had. Miss Jenny Laird has to represent a girl of eighteen and an old woman of eighty, and manages to do it. Miss Glen Alyn (a name new to me) shows herself an actress of considerable talent and force. I am sincerely sorry that the play came off as it did—though I still think that the isolated Second Act, with the Major as hero, would well bear revival by itself. There is some excellent comedy in it as well.

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING

WELL, let's be moving and we'll sing:
"Up pretty, down my pretty."

There was an ivy round a tree
Was so happy
And wrapped right round its hazel tree
And grew right well.
Indeed it was a sight to see,
It grew so well.

They came and cut it all away,
The green ivy.
And said it could no longer stay,
It grew too well.
Indeed it was but truth to say
That it grew well.

It loved so much that hazel hair
And was happy:
Beneath the young leaf flying there
Could but be happy.
And then they cut me all away,
My green ivy.

So we'll be moving and let's sing:
"Up pretty, down my pretty,
And thanks for everything."

J. MENLOVE EDWARDS.

THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

By D. R. DAVIES*

I

WHEN the date of the election was announced—23rd February—and it transpired that the eve of the poll would fall on Ash Wednesday, one of the most sacred days of the Christian Year, it threw a gleam of light into the corners and caverns of the Socialist mind. That one fact spoke, to those who have ears to hear, far more loudly than the speeches of Mr. Attlee, the heretical sermons of Sir Stafford Cripps, and the pious resolutions of the Parliamentary Christian Socialist Group. It was one of those "idle" words—i.e., unpremeditated, spontaneous—which, according to the New Testament *and* modern, secular psychology, reveal the real mind, rather than the carefully staged appearance, of the men who utter them. It revealed, among many other things, that the Christian Faith and its institutional observance is, for the Socialist leaders, a dispensable incident. No political leader for whom Christianity is a decisive, fundamental factor would have decreed an eve of the poll on Ash Wednesday. This is a fact, not only of ritual, but also of far-reaching political, significance. The hurly-burly of electioneering was not the occasion for an analysis of this point. A public obsessed with trivialities is in no mood or temper to dwell upon fundamentals. But now that "the hurly-burly's done and the battle's lost and won", it will profit us to look at certain realities, which take little account of elections and all such ephemerals.

Religion, whatever may be its dogmatic content, does most assuredly embody the tradition of a people. It preserves, as a living force, the principles, values and determining beliefs that have shaped and moulded a people or nation throughout its history. Tradition is, therefore, a crucible in which the dross of the illusions, the temporary conventional superstitions and the passionate make-believe that sway men for a time, is melted away to leave at last the pure gold of abiding truth, with which history must perforce come to terms. History always judges the delusions of men and nations in its own good time. This historic "judgment" is crystallized in tradition, which

> ". . . always caught up with our progress,
> And presently word would come
> That a tribe had been wiped off its icefield,
> Or the lights had gone out in Rome."

Yes! The lights derived from the oil of illusion always go out at last—in England as well as in Rome.

The ascendency of the Socialist Party has coincided with the growth of a tendency to ignore and despise tradition. Look at the wispy straws that have indicated the direction of the wind in recent years—for example, the old school tie. What a source of shallow laughter has it been for the cuckoos of the Left. Low, the cartoonist, has, for a generation, earned the cheap applause of the intelligentsia by jeering at the substance of the English tradition. With a brilliance that bordered upon the diabolical, he incarnated the contempt for tradition in the figure of Col. Blimp, who will even yet have to clear up the mess of the Socialist smart, secular guys.

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WHEN we turn our gaze from the straws to the weightier plants and trees which indicate the *force* of the wind, we observe the violation of tradition during the last fifty years in the thinly veiled pornography of English fiction; in the relaxation of sexual values and standards in British social life; and in declining standards of political honour, and a hundred and one other social phenomena. It is during this process that the Socialist party has become powerful. Synchronous with the descent of tradition has been the ascent of the Socialist party. It is a sinister conjunction.

I can recall very vividly a remark of Mr. Attlee, which he made in the course of his speech at a Victory Rally in 1945. Overcome by the delirium of an electoral triumph which hoisted his party into the seat of power, Mr. Attlee said: "we represent the spirit of the age." Many a truth, we are told, is spoken in jest. What we are not told, however, is that perhaps more truths are spoken in solemnity. When he spoke those words, Mr. Attlee gave utterance to a truth of which he showed not the slightest sign of realization. He spoke of "the spirit of the age" with a post-electoral confidence, as though it were a great thing, as though "the spirit of the age" were the same thing as the spirit of the universe. There is a vast difference between the two, as Mr. Attlee discovered before he had been Prime Minister very long. "The spirit of the age," which Mr. Attlee's party had done so much to conjure out of the vast deep, was a spirit of more take than give, a spirit of anticipation ill-founded; a spirit of ease and relaxation where necessity called for tense application. Above all, it was a spirit that knew not the reality of tradition, that reservoir of principles which no amount of improvisation (in the guise of planning) can successfully side-step. "The spirit of the age," of which Mr. Attlee was so cocky a bearer, was a spirit that took no account whatever of the immemorial ritual of Christian observance. Why should Ash Wednesday, with its call for repentance, be hallowed? If the Socialist leaders only knew it, there was every reason. But such appreciation is altogether beyond the capacity of men who have drowned tradition in the muddy waters of "The spirit of the age".

IN this lies the final, decisive significance of the coincidence of polling day with the beginning of Lent. It announces, as by a trumpet, unawareness of tradition, with its ineluctable principles and factors, ignoring of which breeds, and can only breed, disaster. The violation of reality, of which national tradition is always, to a greater or less extent, an embodiment, disrupts and corrupts society. It kills the goose that lays the golden eggs. The modern history of France, if it proves nothing else, certainly proves this. "This bloody ditch," said Chateaubriand about the Terror, "will never be filled in". A century and a half have amply justified that grim prophecy. "The spirit of the age" is the most dangerous of all political guides. If Colonel Blimp by his stupidity calls forth the sinister monster of revolution, "the spirit of the age" organizes the monster into a permanent social system, a vast prison house in which to enslave men. The disdainful refusal to respect the political immunity of Ash Wednesday reveals more than a lack of religious sentiment. It reveals also a failure of political realism, on which our whole future turns.

II

THE realities that finally govern human society pay scant heed to political ideologies and the untutored wishes of men. Now that the election is over and our course set for a period whose duration none can tell, not even old Moore, it will be the part of wisdom to recognize the simple fact stated above. There are certain ultimates, imponderable ultimates, to which society, whatever its particular 'ism, must bow. This is the sum and substance of tradition in its bearing upon politics, as I have already argued. I propose to indicate what these ultimates (or some of them) are. I shall then attempt to illustrate

their application in the present situation by one or two examples.

Perhaps I can best suggest the character of these "ultimates" by the statement that the consideration finally determining the political situation is the fact of limitation, finiteness. When put in this way, it appears to be the kind of platitude to which the clerical mind seems to be regrettably prone. I do not feel that it is my duty to apologize at this point. The only thing which I deplore about clerical platitudes is not their content, but, generally speaking, the absence of zest and dynamic in their affirmation. It is a truism to say that man is a creature and, therefore, limited; also that the world, being a created thing, is also limited. The truth, however, is that, in the politics of the twentieth century, the pace of which has been dictated by Socialist propaganda, this fact of universal limitation has been forgotten and denied. No political theorist, of course, has committed himself to the idiocy of saying that man is omnipotent. But what has been done, in actual practice, amounts to the same thing. The belief that has dominated twentieth century political behaviour has been that the limitations besetting physical nature and human nature are so remote, that *for practical purposes* they can be ignored. The social results of ignoring the relevance of limitation and of affirming the omnipotence of man are the same. There is a metaphysical distinction, but no trace of a pragmatic distinction. Let us look at this a little more closely.

AESOP'S fable of the frog offers an almost perfect analogy to the economic development of Western civilization during the last hundred or hundred and fifty years. Aesop's frog is a prototype of modern secular man. Its vision of the ox filled its heart with envy, and its mind with such arrogance as to dissipate the sense of its limitations. There arose a breed of frog-philosophers in the muddy swamps which taught the doctrine that, whilst in *theory*, there was a limit to the capacity of frogs to distend, in actual *practice* there was no limit. Our little frog was enthusiastically convinced of the common sense of this doctrine, and one fine day, after a gargantuan meal, it settled down in the security of tall reeds, and began the operation of achieving ox-like size. At some point or other in the process it burst at the seams, but too late to benefit by the discovery that the philosophers had been talking a lot of bilge. It is at this point that the analogy mercifully breaks down. Western man still has "time for amendment of life", though not much.

The spectacular increases in productive power and in actual wealth-production during the last hundred and fifty years in Europe and America transformed the attitude and outlook of Western man. This transformation can roughly be described as a change from a qualitative concept of life to a quantitative. The increase in wealth-production induced the idea that improvement of life consisted in greater quantities of things. Life became confused with living standards. Increase in the quantity of things to be consumed automatically came to mean fuller life. Quantity in things came to mean quality in life. This deadly error is the taproot of the modern dissonance.

IT was from this confusion of quantity with quality that the practical abandonment of the concept of limitation developed. It reached its apex in the theories and speculations of the Technocrats, particularly in America, who crystallized it all into the slogan "the age of abundance". What a fantastic fairy-tale they wove to hypnotize the peoples of the West. The curious reader can find it in the pages of Mr. Stuart Chase's *Men and Machines*, and somewhat more temperately in Major Douglas's *Social Credit* writings. It was a world of pure magic. The theme-song was that science had already achieved the possibility of abolishing poverty, not merely for the industrial peoples, but also for the masses of the East. Hidden in the machines was an inexhaustible treasury of wealth. And the magic lamp? A simple method of bank

accounting! It was as easy as winking. It was the wicked bankers who barred the way. Is it not all written in the A plus B Theorem of Major Douglas? "O God? Major Douglas and all!" There was no limit, not even the sky. The masses were encouraged to believe that the wealth flaunted by the few could be the enjoyment of the many by the simple device of organizing their demands.

It looked for a short while as though it would all come true. That hectic Coolidge era in the United States seemed to give substance to a wonderful dream. It was the era when every man sat in his own motor car, with none to make him afraid—except the traffic-cop; when every little kitchen was "cute", with its own refrigerator; when the Middle West littered all over Europe, and the American accent drowned all other sounds, in London, Paris and Rome. Dear, dead dream, which faded into the nightmare of the slump.

That arbiter of destiny, the ineluctable event, is pounding into the fuddled brain of our generation the grim reality that mortality is hedged by limitation. The raw material of politics is human nature, which is attended by terrible limitations. The raw material of social existence is physical nature, which is also limited. The material resources at the disposal of mankind are not infinite, a fact which is being dramatically demonstrated in the world-wide tragedy of soil-erosion, which is particularly acute in Mexico and the United States. I have no space here to present even a tithe of the evidence, which has been marshalled by Mr. Andrew Osborn* and Mr. William Vogt.† Let the reader discount as much as he can of this evidence, one fact, nevertheless, remains: the severe limitation governing the natural resources available for mankind. So farewell, a long farewell, to the delirious occupation of chasing rainbows. Just as the first half of the twentieth century has been dominated by the delusion of illimitable abundance, the second half must come to terms with the fact of limitation, in the light of which the puerility of the ideologies and isms will become more and more obvious. This is the theoretical priority to which *all* governments will have to adapt themselves.

* *Our Plundered Planet.* (Faber & Faber, 1949.)

† *Road to Survival.* (Gollancz, 1949.)

III

THIS concept of limitation, however, has an application wider than that to material resources. It applies also to men and governments, especially to their sphere and function.

It is not entirely fantastic to speculate whether there is not some relation between the delusion of illimitability and the sinister extension of the State which we have experienced in our time. Is not the all-powerful, Totalitarian State the inevitable response to the dismissal of the concept of limitation in economics and politics? Given the assumption that limitation does not exist in practice for social development, how is it possible to prevent the extension of State power? If society can disregard the idea of limits, why not the State also? And this, of course, is precisely what has happened. Totalitarianism, and the drift towards it, has grown out of the modern disregard of the concept of limitation in two ways.

First, in the sphere of State operation. The State has assumed more and more of the activities and functions of individuals and voluntary bodies, until, finally, it takes over work and production. Any functions still exercised by individuals when that process is complete will be absorbed by the State by the simple fact of political gravitation. At the last, the individual degenerates into a mere animate instrument of State function, by which time Aristotle's definition of the slave as one of the agricultural implements will have to be considerably expanded. A State appropriating all the functions of the person will have reduced all its subjects to the category of implement.

BUT under the domination of the idea of illimitability, the State extends its powers in another way. In the first case, it appropriates personal function. *In the second case, it arrogates to itself divine prerogatives.* It is at this point that the State's disavowal of limits becomes diabolical. At this point, the State becomes god—i.e., asserts the pretensions of deity. The god-State does not emerge in the appropriation of personal function, not even when it is all-inclusive. The god-State assumes concrete form only when it proceeds to exercise rights and powers peculiar to deity; when it claims to re-make human nature, which is precisely what the Totalitarian State is finally driven to do. This is not alas! mere surmise. We see it actually operating in the Soviet theory and practice of "social engineering". Social engineering is the process of adapting immortal souls to the exigencies of a planned economy, of remaking men and women for the Soviet Sabbath. The secular, humanist postponement of limitation to the Greek Kalends finally ripens into the god-State which transgresses an abysmally profound and immemorial taboo—a veritable Satan incarnate. Once society begins to delude itself with the irrelevance of the concept of limitation, it is driven onward fatally by an evil inner momentum to the deified State. It is the second Fall of Man. Dostoievsky foretold it a hundred years ago in his novel, *The Possessed.*

Events, as I have already contended, are now conspiring to restore the concept of limitation, which is the normal attitude of humanity. The modern pride of collective omnipotence is, historically speaking, a mere episode in man's history—an episode fraught with tragedy and blasphemy. Subconsciously, man has in every age, except the modern, been aware, not merely of concrete limits, but, more profoundly, of the concept of limitation, of its metaphysical reality. The new developments in politics and economics are helping to restore modern man to normality and sanity in this respect.

BUT the restoration of limitation cannot be left to events. It calls for conscious co-operation from the minds of men, especially of men (and women) with votes. As Lenin sharply and unwearyingly insisted, events must be assisted by theory if they are to create a revolution. So it must be insisted on, in the present case, that events must be joined by conscious realization if the idea of limitation is to become politically operative and effective. Unless this restoration is achieved, Western man is facing the greatest disaster in his history. The ancient tale of Cnossus, which apparently disappeared overnight, will be repeated. A grim awakening lies ahead in spite of Mr. Morrison's Great Exhibition, when he will have to work overtime to undo the effects of fifty years of Socialist propaganda, with its grandiose promises of superabundance for everybody, every man a millionaire. The astringent truth will afford shelter in the blast. Nothing else will.

The decisive fact, then, with which the peoples of the West have to reckon is that the era on which we are entering is an era of consequences, when we have to reap the bitter fruits of a century's ignoring of limits and limitations. When soil was so intensely cultivated as to become sterile, improvident man moved on to new, virgin soil. *To-day there are no more virgin lands to be exploited.* We are facing consequences. The fatal feature of consequences is that policy is chiefly determined for us *and not by us.* Britain could still determine policy in relation to Hitler in 1933, and even as late as 1937. But in 1939, the consequences of her long neglect determined policy for her. In a similar way now, policy is being determined for us by the necessities of a situation which is the result of dismissing the idea of limitation. Endless expansion of universal consumer capacity has now become a veritable will o' the wisp, by the irrefutable logic of events. This is the reason why Socialism, which embodied the dream of material utopia, is becoming everywhere an instrument of tyranny. Since it is

beyond the power of Socialism, or any other ism, to translate the fantasy of material abundance for everybody into concrete reality, it is being driven, by the inner logic of will-to-power, to pursue the ideal of abundance for nobody. In doing so, it comes into conflict with one of the most fundamental "drives" of human nature. By penalizing individual rewards, it inevitably diminishes the amount of production which it will still be possible to achieve. Mr. Churchill put the essential truth in a nutshell when he defined Socialism as "the nationalization of scarcity". But the point to appreciate is that scarcity cannot be nationalized without the complete regimentation of society. By preventing the appropriation of extra rewards by the exceptional individual, a government inevitably ensures that there will be *less for everybody*. History takes a grim revenge on the dialectic which Marx treated as a deity. In the final issue, the dream of "abundance for everybody" turns into the bleak reality of "scarcity for everybody".

The modification of the individual's desire for material rewards cannot be effected by government action without social slavery and, in consequence, universal impoverishment. The ability to restrain the passion for individual gain without disastrous social effects lies altogether beyond the power of governments. That is a moral, and not a political, power. It springs from religion, from what "the individual does in his own solitariness", (Whitehead). This fact prompts me to offer a concluding reflection.

TWENTIETH century politics has derived its colour from a radically false doctrine of human nature, which, in turn, has inspired equally false hopes in the power and capacities of the State. These hopes have given rise to delusion that government action can make men and women good, happy and contented. This is a deadly error. It has twisted and distorted an entire civilization. The contribution which governments can make to human happiness and welfare is very little and chiefly negative. As Burke once put it, the amount of good which governments can do is minimum, but the evil they can wreak is maximum. In the social laboratory, which we call history, results alas! take a long time to become visibly clear. The fifty years of our century have already demonstrated (a) the enormous evil which governments can entail and (b) the almost negligible amount of the good they perform. "Those people work more wisely who seek to achieve good in their own small corner of the world and then leave the leaven to leaven the whole lump, than those who are for ever thinking that life is vain unless one can act through the central government, carry legislation, achieve political power and do big things" (p. 104 of Prof. Butterfield's *Christianity and History*). It is generally true to conclude—certainly on the evidence of modern politics—that the more governments act, the greater the evil in social life.

Let me make it clear that this is not an argument that governments should not act at all. Such an argument would be merely silly. It is an argument rather that when governments do act, their action should be conditioned by the realization that, at best, the good which such action can effect is very small. Indeed, modern society would be less sick than it is if it had been dominated by the idea that government activity is a necessary evil. This perhaps, is too extreme a simplification of a problem that is essentially insoluble in history. But it is, at any rate, a simplification less potentially disastrous for the happiness of mankind than its opposite.

Since nature and history are now conspiring to impose the reality of limitation upon the world, its acceptance will be rendered less painful if we can begin by curbing our hitherto extravagant faith in what is possible for governments to achieve.

Short Story

LAST TRIP

By JACK PHILIP-NICHOLS

THE deep-sea tug *Sturdy* lay alongside the jetty in Falmouth Harbour.

From time to time she bumped heavily against the thick coir fenders hanging over the jetty like mammoth sausages. A strong north-easterly gale slatted the signal halyards against the mast, and caused a low humming sound in the taut wireless aerial.

Occasionally a puff of steam showed that the safety valves were just on the lift, for the *Sturdy* was keeping steam to sail to any ship needing assistance in the heavy seas making up with the wind.

In the wireless room the operator read a newspaper whilst waiting hopefully for the shore telephone to ring with news of a salvage job. He was always optimistic . . . he felt sure that a big salvage payment or a football pool prize would come his way . . . but the phone seemed to be deadly silent.

Below in the officers' messroom, the captain of the tug sat in an armchair and listened to a midget radio.

CAPTAIN ELLIS'S mind was not, however, properly focused on the patter of the two comedians . . . for he was apprehensive.

To-morrow he was to retire—after forty years at sea, during which time he had been successful in one thing in particular—he had concealed a terrible fear of the sea and all its dangers.

With just the minimum of luck, the passing of a few more hours . . . he would be done with the sea for ever . . . living without fear in his own house . . . miles inland, with his wife and two daughters for constant company.

But a strong gale was blowing and anything might happen. His lively imagination pictured all the accidents of stranding, fire, explosion and sinking. The *Sturdy* might have to go bowling out, bucking the sea on a salvage trip.

On this trip, as on any other in the last forty years, disaster could happen. He slid further down into the armchair and tried to take in the tune of a song that was now being sung by one of the comedians.

Williams the mate, a youngster of twenty-five, sat up straight at the table playing a game of patience. He was uneasy, too, he hoped against hope that the *Sturdy* would still be alongside next morning, and that the gale would soon blow itself out.

He had no liking for jumping around on a heaving deck getting a disabled ship in tow. . . he had heard tales of hawsers breaking and cutting men in half . . . men swept overboard into seas too fierce for any boat to traverse . . . to die a few short yards from their comrades.

THE engineer, "Steamy" James, read an old comic and guffawed from time to time, sometimes at the characters in the comic, sometimes at the radio comedians . . . he was quite happy and free from alarm. Down below they had a good head of steam—no defects at all—and he would welcome a trip that would result in some salvage money.

As the gale moaned round the ship, the engineer felt cheerier and the captain and mate more morose.

The comedian faded out for a moment and a soft voice said, "Here is a gale warning that has just come in——"

The captain reached out and flicked the radio off. "We know all about that," he said with a forced chuckle.

Williams glanced at the captain thinking, "What a character . . . the prospect of going to sea tonight doesn't worry him . . . even though it's his last night on the job . . . he's a tough old bird all right."

The captain picked up a book on poultry-keeping . . . his eyes glanced across the mate's laid-out cards and he smiled.

He thought quite wrongly. "He's hoping against hope that some ship's propeller shaft will break so that we can go racing out to the rescue."

There was a knock at the door and the wireless operator came in quickly with a message pad . . . "Captain, sir, just got this over the shore phone."

THE captain took hold of the pad and read the message aloud : "Tug *Sturdy* from owners. Proceed to assistance of *Alfreston* in position Lat. 50.0 N., Long. 4.0, 4′ W., use own discretion as to port to which ship is to be towed."

The engineer folded the comic deliberately and then went below. The captain stood up straight and spoke almost sharply to the wireless operator : "Tell the office we are just leaving, and then do your best to contact the ship by radio and find out her trouble; perhaps we will only have to stand by her, after all."

The wireless operator left. Captain Ellis turned to the mate: "Stand by to slip . . . get the eighteen-inch manila flaked down aft before we get clear of the breakwater . . . I don't think you will be able to stand up once we get into the open sea . . . put some good strong stops on it . . . we don't want it washing over the side and getting round the screw."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Mr. Williams, thinking. "He's a cool customer . . . a job on his last night with us, and he's not a bit disturbed."

The captain put on his overcoat with an oilskin over the top, then stamped up to the bridge. The quartermaster was switching on the navigation lights and trying the siren.

UNDER the chart table cover the chart was spread. Captain Ellis flicked parallel rulers about and pencilled in the position of the disabled ship. Then he ran off a couple of courses and with dividers pecked off the distance.

He thought, "If we can make ten knots in this weather, we should be there in three hours."

A night watchman stood with his back to the gale on the jetty . . . the captain rang down, "Stand by," and picking up his megaphone, he shouted down to the forecastle, "Let go for'd!"

The night watchman flung the manilas off the bollards, and the gale caught the high bow of the tug and started to drive it away from the jetty.

"Let go aft," yelled the captain. From aft came a shout against the wind, "All gone."

The captain rang down, "Slow ahead," and the giant screw throbbed. "Port wheel." "Port wheel," repeated the quartermaster . . . the tug surged forward and swung rapidly round.

"Midships," ordered the captain . . . the quartermaster spun the wheel back.

"Steer south." The man at the wheel repeated the order; then, a minute later he reported, "Course, sir—south."

THE tug was rung up to half speed, and with the gale astern the weather seemed less severe. The hot oil-fuel smoke blew across the bridge from time to time as the *Sturdy* raced for the harbour entrance.

Six seamen toiled on the tiny aft deck flaking down a large manila for towing. No shipping moved in the harbour . . . the few anchored ships had an anchor watch on deck . . . the tug sped past them.

Captain Ellis altered course to go through the breakwater, the wind came thudding against the ship's side, and with the small sea making at the entrance the tug started to roll and buck. Down aft the mate put on the last of the stops securing the mainila, and sent the seamen into the galley to get warm again.

Then he hurried along the port side and up the ladder to the bridge. He bobbed his head under the chart table cover and blinked at

the bright light. As he did so, the voice-pipe whistle blew and he took it out.

The voice of the wireless operator came up: "The *Alfreston* says she has been given her position by D.F. and it is Lat. 49.59 N. and Long. 4.4 W. She has struck submerged wreckage, and is unable to steer . . . though she can steam at about four knots to help the tow."

"Right," said the mate, copying down the position on to the navigating notebook . . . then he ducked out and told the captain.

"H'm," remarked the captain. "It might help to take a bit of the strain off our tow-line if she can steam ahead a little."

THEN he took bearings of shore lights and fixed his position on the chart. "We alter course in about half an hour," he said. "We ought to be somewhere near her after about another two hours and a half after that, if we can keep up the speed."

The tug lifted to the sea and glided down slopes of green water . . . thudding surges of water burst on her weather bow and spattered spray high over her bridge.

"Take over," said the captain to the mate. "Alter as soon as you reach the position I've marked . . . get fixes while you can . . . the wind is bound to set us a bit to the southward."

The captain clattered down the ladder and went aft to look at the towing gear. The after capstan was creaking round slowly, just warming through . . . and surges of water were hissing across the deck and out through the freeing ports.

He felt vaguely sick. "Would it go all right?" "Why could not some other tug get there first, and then let him be recalled!"

"Only a few more hours and he would have been safe out of it for ever."

As he came for'd again he looked in at the galley. One of the seamen asked, "Would you like a cup of cocoa, sir?"

THE captain smiled. "Yes please, Rooney." As the cocoa warmed his stomach he began to feel better in the warm galley . . . the company was cheerful . . . one of the men said, "It's a five-thousand-ton ship, quite a bit of salvage money if we pull it off."

The captain put down his cup. "If we pull it off," he thought. Then, "If I was only one of these seamen—nothing to worry about—just to do what I'm told—no responsibility——"

The galley seemed a sanctuary for a mad moment . . . he felt like stopping there . . . letting the mate get on with it . . . saying he was ill. . . In a few short hours he would be free . . . no more sea . . . no more responsibilities . . . no more worry.

"How long before we reach her, sir?" asked one of the men. The question brought him back. "About two and a half hours," he answered.

The *Sturdy* was turning now . . . the seas came surging down the starboard side and the men in the galley braced themselves against the heavy roll. Coal in the galley bunker rattled around . . . some of the cook's pots slid around on the tiled deck.

The tea urn was lashed down on the stove with a piece of log-line . . . now and again a gush of hot water shot out and sizzled on the red-hot stove.

THE seamen battened the starboard side galley door and stuffed a deck-cloth in the crack where salt water was leaking through. The captain opened the port door and waited for a lull to leap out.

When he had gone, the oldest seaman there shut the door and remarked, "He's a tough old chap, the skipper . . . don't say much . . . but he knows what he's doing all right."

"Jesus . . . he's lucky to be retiring tomorrow," said another. "Let's hope we salve this blinkin' merchantman before he does retire," said the bos'n.

As the captain climbed the port side bridge ladder the mate glanced back and saw him. Inwardly he said, "Thank God he's come back up . . . I feel better with him here."

The captain was thinking, "Ah! it's good to have this young and keen chap on the bridge at a time like this . . . perhaps it'll be all right."

He shouted to the mate, "I'll take over. Go down and get some cocoa in the galley, and see that the Schermuly gun is O.K."

"Aye, aye, sir," shouted the mate, and with a sigh of relief he trotted down the ladder. In the lobby he looked at the Schermuly gun, rockets and lines, then he ran swiftly along to the galley door and nipped inside.

The bos'n poured out a cup of cocoa. "Not long now, eh?"

"I'll be glad when we've got her in tow," said the mate, as he stirred in some sugar. "I don't like waiting about."

From time to time the eight men in the galley braced themselves against the motion . . . the tea urn still slopped over, making a steamy atmosphere in the galley, tight shut against the sea.

. . . . . .

THE signalman opened the galley door, came in and blinked at the light.

"Skipper says we're on the spot . . . ought to see her soon, he says; you'd better switch on the floodlights and stand by." The men tumbled out of the galley, bracing themselves against the wild lurching of the tug . . . the signalman fought his way back to the bridge. One by one the big floodlights clicked on, throwing a ghastly white glare over the aft deck and a small area of boiling sea.

The huge manila was flaked down along the starboard side, and seas surged over it continually. The mate and two hands got ready the barrico and with a small sail on it which was to be used for taking a grass rope over to the *Alfreston*. If this failed they would use the slower method of firing a line-throwing gun.

Over a waste of high surges a pair of red lights were visible for a few seconds at a time. The tug turned slowly and passed ahead of the looming ship . . . as the radiance of the floodlights moved round, the seamen of the helpless freighter could be seen standing huddled together on her forecastle head.

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the bright light. As he did so, the voice-pipe whistle blew and he took it out.

The voice of the wireless operator came up: "The *Alfreston* says she has been given her position by D.F. and it is Lat. 49.59 N. and Long. 4.4 W. She has struck submerged wreckage, and is unable to steer . . . though she can steam at about four knots to help the tow."

"Right," said the mate, copying down the position on to the navigating notebook . . . then he ducked out and told the captain.

"H'm," remarked the captain. "It might help to take a bit of the strain off our tow-line if she can steam ahead a little."

THEN he took bearings of shore lights and fixed his position on the chart. "We alter course in about half an hour," he said. "We ought to be somewhere near her after about another two hours and a half after that, if we can keep up the speed."

The tug lifted to the sea and glided down slopes of green water . . . thudding surges of water burst on her weather bow and spattered spray high over her bridge.

"Take over," said the captain to the mate. "Alter as soon as you reach the position I've marked . . . get fixes while you can . . . the wind is bound to set us a bit to the southward."

The captain clattered down the ladder and went aft to look at the towing gear. The after capstan was creaking round slowly, just warming through . . . and surges of water were hissing across the deck and out through the freeing ports.

He felt vaguely sick. "Would it go all right?" "Why could not some other tug get there first, and then let him be recalled!"

"Only a few more hours and he would have been safe out of it for ever."

As he came for'd again he looked in at the galley. One of the seamen asked, "Would you like a cup of cocoa, sir?"

THE captain smiled. "Yes please, Rooney." As the cocoa warmed his stomach he began to feel better in the warm galley . . . the company was cheerful . . . one of the men said, "It's a five-thousand-ton ship, quite a bit of salvage money if we pull it off."

The captain put down his cup. "If we pull it off," he thought. Then, "If I was only one of these seamen—nothing to worry about—just to do what I'm told—no responsibility——"

The galley seemed a sanctuary for a mad moment . . . he felt like stopping there . . . letting the mate get on with it . . . saying he was ill. . . In a few short hours he would be free . . . no more sea . . . no more responsibilities . . . no more worry.

"How long before we reach her, sir?" asked one of the men. The question brought him back. "About two and a half hours," he answered.

The *Sturdy* was turning now . . . the seas came surging down the starboard side and the men in the galley braced themselves against the heavy roll. Coal in the galley bunker rattled around . . . some of the cook's pots slid around on the tiled deck.

The tea urn was lashed down on the stove with a piece of log-line . . . now and again a gush of hot water shot out and sizzled on the red-hot stove.

THE seamen battened the starboard side galley door and stuffed a deck-cloth in the crack where salt water was leaking through. The captain opened the port door and waited for a lull to leap out.

When he had gone, the oldest seaman there shut the door and remarked, "He's a tough old chap, the skipper . . . don't say much . . . but he knows what he's doing all right."

"Jesus . . . he's lucky to be retiring tomorrow," said another. "Let's hope we salve this blinkin' merchantman before he does retire," said the bos'n.

As the captain climbed the port side bridge ladder the mate glanced back and saw him. Inwardly he said, "Thank God he's come back up . . . I feel better with him here."

The captain was thinking, "Ah! it's good to have this young and keen chap on the bridge at a time like this . . . perhaps it'll be all right."

He shouted to the mate, "I'll take over. Go down and get some cocoa in the galley, and see that the Schermuly gun is O.K."

"Aye, aye, sir," shouted the mate, and with a sigh of relief he trotted down the ladder. In the lobby he looked at the Schermuly gun, rockets and lines, then he ran swiftly along to the galley door and nipped inside.

The bos'n poured out a cup of cocoa. "Not long now, eh?"

"I'll be glad when we've got her in tow," said the mate, as he stirred in some sugar. "I don't like waiting about."

From time to time the eight men in the galley braced themselves against the motion . . . the tea urn still slopped over, making a steamy atmosphere in the galley, tight shut against the sea.

. . . . . .

THE signalman opened the galley door, came in and blinked at the light.

"Skipper says we're on the spot . . . ought to see her soon, he says; you'd better switch on the floodlights and stand by." The men tumbled out of the galley, bracing themselves against the wild lurching of the tug . . . the signalman fought his way back to the bridge. One by one the big floodlights clicked on, throwing a ghastly white glare over the aft deck and a small area of boiling sea.

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As the bridge drew level with him a lifebelt whizzed down and struck the water three feet from him.

IN the glare of the searchlight now almost vertical, the mate was seen to flip the belt over his head . . . then a huge wave hid him from sight . . . when he re-appeared he was in the lifebelt and waving his hand.

The captain pressed hard against the bridge rail, shouted orders, "Slow ahead" . . . "Stop" . . . "Half astern" . . . "Stop."

Meanwhile the seamen aft had six heaving lines ready. As the tug's engines stopped she drifted down wind plunging crazily. Four lines shot out and criss-crossed over the mate. As he grabbed at two of them and took turns round the lifebelt the seamen and the bos'n hauled him alongside.

By main force they dragged him aboard and two men helped him along to the galley.

Then the captain rang down, "Full ahead," and ordered "Hard a'port," just in time, for the tug was almost across the bows of the disabled ship. Slowly the tug forged ahead, the wind taking her past the *Alfreston* almost broadside on.

The grass rope was floating in odd loops across the heavy sea, but the men on the freighter had got a grapnel across it and were hauling it in.

Gradually the *Sturdy* worked ahead of the *Alfreston* again, and with the engine going dead slow the tug was in a fine position for passing the tow. The grass rope was hauled in by the freighter's crew and the wire hawser followed.

CAPTAIN ELLIS sighed with relief. "So far, so good." Right aft in the tug the wire crept out . . . breaking the spunyarn stops a few at a time until the end of the large manila got a pull. Then the end of the huge hawser slid lazily out over the stern, tautening up now and again until its restraining lashings were cut.

In half an hour *Alfreston's* signal lamp spelt out, "Manila secured to our cable . . . all ready to go ahead . . . will veer our cable as required."

The mate came on the bridge just as the signalman was passing the signal pad to the captain. "Good boy," said the captain, "not hurt at all, I hope."

"Not dead . . . thanks to you, sir," said the mate. "I certainly did not expect to get back again."

The captain slapped him on the back. "Switch on the towing lights . . . and keep a look out for shore lights when we get a bit closer in."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the mate, thinking, "What a cool old bird he is."

THE captain's hand trembled as he reached for the telegraph to slowly notch up to half-speed . . . he was deadly afraid that the tow would break or that the tug would capsize . . . he felt that his luck had been too good all night.

Down aft . . . the bos'n put a sledge-hammer in a handy place for knocking off the slip on the towing hook . . . and then the seamen clustered back in the galley. The searchlight was trained on the tow and in its light the huge manila shook itself clear of the water for a part of its length, vibrating and cracking as it took the weight.

By signal the *Alfreston* arranged to run her engine as fast as safety allowed, and the course was set for home in the teeth of the gale.

. . . . . .

SEVEN O'CLOCK in the morning found them creeping into Falmouth with two harbour tugs closing on the *Alfreston* to take her to an anchor berth before docking for repair.

Later the *Sturdy's* mate and captain went over to sign the salvage agreement and then returned to the tug which was now alongside the jetty.

At one o'clock the new captain arrived, a thirty-year-old man from one of the company's smaller tugs, now getting his promotion.

"You had a good deal of sport out there last night," he said after the first introduction.

The mate answered, "I got washed overboard . . . and got picked up by good seamanship."

Captain Ellis nodded and laughed. It was all over now. "You were lucky not to have been drowned."

The taxi arrived at two o'clock sharp and the steward carried the retiring captain's cases out and put them inside. The crew lined up on the jetty to shake the hand of the man who had commanded them for the last three years.

Then the mate shook his hand heartily and the taxi left to the cheering of the crew.

Inside, the captain congratulated himself that now he would never be afraid again . . . every month the pension cheque would arrive . . . no more decisions . . . no more risks of collision, or sinking. He felt young again; he knew his wife and daughters were preparing a little party for him, and he felt fine.

. . . . . .

THE mate went into his cabin and switched on the radiator, there were his clothes that he had been wearing the night before . . . rough dried in the galley and put out for the laundry. "What a pity old Ellis had retired," he thought, "he was a real captain of the old school."

Somehow he seemed lighter after his escape . . . now he knew his days of apprehension were over . . . he would never be afraid again.

Taking out a piece of notepaper he started to compose a letter to the Marine Superintendent of the company asking his favourable consideration when a tug command became open.

Down below the seamen and firemen were arguing as to how much salvage money they would eventually get.

The gale was rapidly blowing itself out.

"THE EARNEST EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE"

THE larks on Easter day
Ring out their chime above all lands.
Fearless and gay
From citadels not made with hands,
They peal above the woes
That, far and near, their happy legions see,
As when He rose
Their consummation and our peace to be.

NESCA A. ROBB.

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Edited by CHRISTOPHER SYKES

BLOOD SPORT

A PRECIOUS gift was exchanged at the Christmas of 1912: a certain garland woven with ruthless skill by Max Beerbohm.* We can fancy the joy of many homes in which this array of lovely blooms was first unpacked, though we cannot be unmindful that the occasion had a dark side. There must have been mourning in the midst of the festivities. Evidence exists that H. G. Wells was woefully affected, and it is hard to believe that the Kipling Christmas was uniformly merry that year. But the joy of the work is persistent, and that fact should make it possible to dry any tears which may remain; for the splendour of the garland, it must be recognized, is not entirely due to the brilliance of the parodist, but almost as much to the continuing vitality of his butts thirty-eight years after.

It is a strange and impressive testimony to the excellence of literature in the early years of this century that of the eighteen authors parodied in this book thirty-eight years ago, only four, Hewlett, Harris, G. S. Street, and A. C. Benson, can be said to be unread to-day; and this is only partly true of Frank Harris, whose fame has been kept alive by memorialists, and even of A. C. Benson, who is still the delight of some elderly and unfashionable people of quiet taste. Of two of the victims, Henry James and Meredith, it can be said that they are more widely read to-day than they were in 1912, particularly by the sort of people who then found them alarmingly difficult to understand. The others all stand much where they did, in spite of the grievous mauling some of their reputations suffered on that pre-First War Christmas Day.

* *A Christmas Garland.* By Max Beerbohm. *William Heinemann.* 10s. 6d.

It is instructive to go down the list and see which of the victims are most hurt by the mockery, which ones appear to us as lesser beings after exposure, and which survive in their original dimensions. Of those who fared really badly Kipling was the most eminent. The adventures of "P.C.X. 36" reveal that atrocious element in Kipling's writing, that curious mixture of cruelty, servility, and delight in ugliness, which none of his many defenders has been able to explain away, and which was for the first time effectively laid bare here, and just how effectively, the following paragraph by itself can show:

> "There is a thing called Dignity. Small boys sometimes stand on it. Then they have to be kicked. Then they get down weeping. I don't stand on Dignity."

The reaction against Kipling was certainly much, perhaps over-strengthened by this caricature, for a later generation of intelligentsia took this as the whole truth about him, and went badly astray. This, the only one of the parodies which makes one hate the original and wish to destroy it, is revealing when compared to what was contrived against Wells. No mercy was shown to Wells, and yet he, unlike Kipling, comes out relatively little hurt: we feel the same about Wells after reading "Perkins and Mankind" as we did before. The explanation is probably that Wells's faults, like his virtues, are entirely obvious to any reader from the beginning, and even at their most exasperating are clearly connected with a generous nature, while the faults of Kipling are furtive, often difficult to define, and when set apart from his greatness, one as often as not discovered to be the product of an intense meanness of mind.

John Galsworthy came off very badly too,

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but his public, not being Maximilian in any part, stayed faithful and unaware of what had happened, and his reputation continued to increase enormously throughout the next twenty years. He was (and is) read by thoughtful "middlebrow" people, and he was careful not to make demands on subtlety which they might not possess. His gravest fault, perhaps, was that he wrote for people inferior to himself in mental calibre, and avoided a higher and more critical audience. Max Beerbohm imitated his style with little exaggeration, just making the narrative machinery creak a little more than in the real performance. The resulting effect of hollow theatricality is frightful. A bad Christmas indeed must have been spent by Galsworthy, only a little enlivened by the thought of his public's carefree jollity. George Moore's public was similarly unaffected by an assault which confirms those who do not belong there in a strong dislike. Moore's oddities, like those of Belloc, were hardly open to exaggeration, and so those who accepted them were not influenced by this masterful guying.

Lasting and shattering damage was done to A. C. Benson. One of the most amiable and worthy of men, whose memory is still deeply revered at Eton and Cambridge, he was, as a novelist, a tedious old lady, and the Christmas Garland virtually put an end to his long literary career, certainly so far as fiction was concerned. If you have strong nerves, it is almost worth reading one of his now unfashionable novels to enjoy the delicate skill with which the parodist slew him. It was cruel fun, perhaps, for Benson was so weak a writer that the ridiculously large reputation he enjoyed was bound to die fairly soon, and so—but such moralizing is out of place. To be really good, parody must be red in tooth and claw. This certainly is. The roses blush for the most terrible of reasons.

Surprisingly enough, certain victims, in spite of great strength in the mockery they endure, come out of the torture-house wholly unscathed. This is true in the case of "Scruts", supposedly by Arnold Bennett, in which there is an extraordinary illusion of sincerity, in spite of wild freaks of absurdity. In the same way the reader's appetite for Edmund Gosse's reminiscent essays is in no way put off, but even increased by the Pseudo-Gosse's account of how he brought Ibsen and Browning together; but most unexpected of all is the escape of the highly vulnerable Chesterton from the scoffer's darts. It may be that the parodist was influenced by affection here, or that sound theology precludes the act of parody. At all events "Some Damnable Errors about Christmas" is really much better than the great majority of Chesterton's essays. The most difficult of these parodies to assess is that of Henry James. The vocabulary is wonderfully guyed, and certain of James's speech-rhythms, but we do not feel the presence of a compelling master-idea, such as is present—though often out of reach, it is true—in every single thing James wrote. It may be that the reader has been spoilt by the better parody of Henry James which Max Beerbohm wrote some years later, and which is called "The Guerdon."

Final joy of this republication: it contains one new piece by M**r*c* B*r*ng. The opening will whet many appetites:

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CHAPTER V

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W. B. YEATS

YEATS, THE MAN AND THE MASKS. By Richard Ellmann. *Macmillan.* 21*s.*

MR. ELLMANN should have pondered Voltaire's remark "The secret of being a bore is to tell everything", lest it prove to have personal application. Surely no recipient of a Research Fellowship was ever more meticulous to observe its implied obligations than this author, who, lest his sponsors accuse him of taking an occasional day off, records that he ploughed through some 50,000 pages of unpublished manuscripts in addition to published materials.

The son of J. B. Yeats, a painter bigger than his work and with a strong literary faculty, W. B. Yeats was as a boy wretched and overpowered by the dominating influence of his rationalistic father. Repudiating his father's scepticism, he sought belief, partly in religion, partly in the Irish folklore that obsessed his mother, while adopting at school, to confound his devout acquaintances, something of his father's rationalism. Already his nature was divided, already he had become a *poseur*. "The boy who was awkward and timid and weak let his enraptured imagination dwell on the magician who could master the whole world by his mind," developing an interest in the occult that lasted throughout his life and did much to vitiate his work.

Breaking with family tradition by refusing to go to Trinity College, Yeats, although already he had demonstrated that his talent lay in writing rather than in painting, profitlessly studied art, finding that rejection of his father's principles did not save him from imitating his father's style. Repudiating his father's Unionism he became a Nationalist, and as a final repudiation he abandoned art. Unhappily, his father was too big a person to be repudiated entirely, so that "Yeats' battle with his father is merging into a battle with himself". This battle raged beyond his father's death, though in late middle-age, when inhibiting factors were tiring, Yeats found through his father's respect for his opinions and his work a relationship that allowed him to achieve such integration as he was to know.

The division of his personality resulted in his use of symbolism, and it is in the tracking down of Yeats' symbols that Mr. Ellmann tends to lose Yeats. He pursues him through Theosophy in an entertaining chapter, and although he shows Yeats' continuing dichotomy resulting from the repudiation of his father, the man of action, and consequent identification of himself with his mother's family, the world of folklore and dreaming, Yeats as a human being never comes to life. The book is curiously devoid of the sense of relationship, belying its title by devoting more space to the intricacies of his work than to Yeats' personality. Frustrated in action, frustrated in dream, Yeats found a further frustration in love of Maud Gonne, a woman of strong character whom he introduced to

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the Theosophical-magical society, the Golden Dawn, which he had founded in the hope of blending his divided impulses. Under the compulsion of impressing Maud Gonne by his capacity for action, he joined her in Irish Nationalism, but characteristically sought to further Nationalistic aims by cultural rather than militaristic penetration. For Maud Gonne he wrote his play "Cathleen Ni Houlihan", and the fruits of much effort wasted in attempts to define a ritual for his Golden Dawn cult, in other strivings to find himself in action and in dream, were gathered by the National Theatre which he founded and developed into the Abbey. In persuading Synge to provide Irish drama Yeats must have got more than he bargained for: never was dramatist less sentimental about the peasantry, nor Synge less effective than when he used as theme the legend of "Deirdre of the Sorrows". Synge might, indeed, have written Lawrence's words: "Yeats may reverence the simpleton and call him God's Fool, but to me the village idiot is a cold egg."

When he had loved her for fourteen years, Maud Gonne's marriage wrought a violent transformation in Yeats. Too long had he indulged the feminine side of his nature, in his work and in his life, where it had cost him Maud. Now he would be masculine, aggressive, quarrelling, swashbuckling, wenching. Yet aggression still gave rise to feelings of guilt, and still Yeats failed to achieve the unity he sought. At fifty-two he married, achieving reconciliation of opposites, perhaps, even if fusion eluded him. Mr. Ellmann is anxious to provide a happy ending, but Yeats' curious addiction to symbols and Mr. Ellmann's zeal to elucidate them leave Yeats himself something of a symbol. But of what? Of a frustrated old man, perhaps, regretting the sins he failed to commit in his youth.

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Novels

THE SURE THING. Merle Miller. *John Lehmann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE BIG WHEEL. John Brooks. *Gollancz.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

IT is now generally recognized that any novelist who wishes to make his work significant has got to bring back the element of moral conflict, not at all easy when writing about a society which has largely abandoned moral standards. The Catholic writer still has the advantage of considering adultery and suicide as important; the snob and the inverted snob have the social order still to play with; but the number of subjects which the general reader regards as morally important has greatly declined since the days when Mrs. Humphrey Ward's novels made headline news.

As with so many other things, moral conflict in the novel has been driven into politics. Novelists of the thirties almost all had recourse to the Spanish Civil War; then came the Nazis, the Concentration Camps and the Iron Curtain. Mr. Merle Miller's novel, *The Sure Thing*, is a contemporary version of this type; his theme is the helplessness of the individual against the American Inquisition into the private lives and political opinions of its State officials.

The Sure Thing is a brilliant piece of special pleading on facts which seem a little too carefully arranged, although no one who has followed the extraordinary case of Alger Hiss can doubt the "mechanics" of the story.

Considered as a piece of intelligent entertainment there is no doubt of its effectiveness. It seizes upon a topical subject; it does a series of dazzling trick shots forward and backward which illuminate not only the history and love life of Bradley Douglas but the whole intellectual set-up of the progressive young American during the thirties.

Bradley Douglas is an official of the State Department in Washington and a victim of the Red Witch Hunt. Like every other young man of his generation and upbringing he has been an anti-fascist, an agitator for intervention in Spain and in Abyssinia, for the rights of negroes and other racial and political minorities. He had married a Jewess but her wealth gave him a feeling of inferiority and their love life was inadequate, so that, when the story opens, he had acquired, together with a more Conservative ideology, a more satisfactory and wholly Aryan mate. The author leaves us in no doubt as to the adequacy of their love life and I was reminded of an Anglo-American novelist's recent remark that in America a first wife is regarded like a first bicycle, something you learn on and then trade in for a new model.

The steps by which Bradley Douglas is thrust out of his job are described with absolute credibility. There is a snooping Congressman from his own state who had disliked his father; a colleague jealous of his influence with the departmental chief; there are the F.B.I. men themselves, one of them working out a past at least as "unsound" as Douglas's; there is the famous defence lawyer, a shoddy *faux-bonhomme* who drops the case when it looks like becoming too hot. There is also a real Communist agent, Douglas's own typist, a Jewess infatuated with the tough Party boss who has planted her in the office.

The weakness of the book is Douglas himself, who only comes to life in the emotional scenes with his two wives, scenes irrelevant to the main theme of the novel and too standardized to arouse any feeling except a suspicion that they were put in to make the book livelier. This they do, but the result is to lower what should have been a serious moral protest to the Hollywood level.

THE BIG WHEEL deals with the problem of conscience as it affects those who write for a paper which demands that the private convictions of its contributors should conform with the editorial views. *Present Day* is an influential American magazine whose real life model will be immediately recognized. It employs an army of "researchers" to get up the facts on a given subject and an army of editors to present

these facts in accordance with what is called the American way. Its circulation is stupendous, its influence enormous and it pays its contributors the highest journalistic rates in the world.

The guiding mind of *Present Day* is its editor, Edgar Masterson. He is the grandson of one of the great American robber-barons; like every young man he had his period of protest, he supported Sacco and Vanzetti and edited a radical paper in the twenties. With the realization that all these activities were made possible by inherited wealth and connections, and anyhow made no dent, Edgar Masterson gave them up and became editor of *Present Day*. He brought to his new assignment the moral fervour once expended in sponsoring unpopular causes and the plot of the book is Masterson's disintegration when he discovers that his staff do not support his conviction of the importance of his mission; they write for pay.

In spite of its slow movement and its absence of *bravura* this is a very good book. Its portraits lack the impressionistic brilliance of Mr. Merle Miller's but they have their own effectiveness, they impress with their truth and convert the fabulous glittering city of New York into a place in which real people can live and work, at a price. For the American, says Mr. Brooks, speaking of Masterson, "needs to be both successful and right". Even those who protest against the monster of organized opinion, "feel its compulsion and the futility of any opposition . . . to the evil man creates through his guilt or greed, or simply through his need to create".

This sincere and very moving book should be read by every thoughtful reader who is tired of the swift stream-lined prose, the over-insistence on sex and the chromium-plated glitter of too much American writing. Its people are not high-lighted but humanized and having read a great many novels about American journalists I would say that they could stand it.

RUBY MILLAR.

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Short Notices

ROMMEL

ROMMEL. By Desmond Young, with a Foreword by Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d. net.*

LIKE Charles XII, Rommel caught the imagination of his age by individuality and self-reliance. Both were personal commanders; both conducted their battles more by observation than by plan; both were abnormally courageous and chivalrous; both, when a chance offered, never hesitated to attack however small were their forces, and, when neither could exert full personal command, both were decisively defeated, Charles at Poltava and Rommel at Alamein, the one having previously been wounded and the other having previously gone sick. Herein lay a certain weakness in their generalship; for, like a dictatorship, it was too individual to permit of efficient succession.

Because of this defect, and defect it only is when carried to extremes, this admirable life story of one of the really great soldiers of the last war is of outstanding interest to us; for we are a cautious people, and in war our generals are apt to be over-cautious soldiers. Rommel notes this again and again, and his criticism of British generalship and soldiership—always fair and never vindictive—should be taken to heart. "British Command never reacted quickly," he writes, and again: ". . . their tactics were methodical and cast to a pattern." This was largely due to lack of personal command; therefore to the delegation of command, which requires a complex system of intercommunication, a corresponding waste of time, and in consequence methodical planning to make good the loss of fleeting moments. As Brigadier Desmond Young points out: it is remarkable that, "Rommel was twice defeated when General Auchinleck took over in the forward area and gave his orders on the spot." Also that, "He escaped defeat in June, 1942, because decisions and communications on our side were too slow".

In considering this all important question of personal command, it must never be overlooked that the terrain of North Africa ideally suited it. Historically it is a cavalry country, a veritable race-course; therefore, under present day conditions an all but unrivalled tank country. The problem was one of speed followed by immediate action, not so much in order to destroy as to demoralize and to disorganize instead of to kill. Rommel grasped these requirements to the full. " . . . speed of operation and quick reaction of the Command," he says, "were the decisive factors." And again: "The Commander-in-Chief must be the driving motor of the battle. One must always have to reckon with his appearance in personal control." It is indeed remarkable that Rommel lays down that in desert fighting the order of priority is: "(1) petrol and oil; (2) water; (3) food; (4) prisoners." Remarkable because there is no mention of ammunition and killing; not that the one was unnecessary and the other avoidable, but that speed in itself is ammunition and the attack by paralysation largely enables capturing to replace slaughtering.

However, the strangest item in the story is, that not one of Rommel's ideas was original; for long before the war they had been thought out in England, and for the most part officially scrapped. Put into practise against us, we were astonished and became Rommel fans. Fans we remain, as this best-seller among war books proves. Nevertheless, it may be asked: have we even yet learnt the lessons Rommel learnt from us?

J. F. C. FULLER.

A HISTORY OF FREEDOM

THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT. By K. R. Mackenzie. *Pelican Books.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

THIS remarkable little book is designed to describe in short compass how the English Parliament came into being, and to explain its present procedure in the light of its previous history. It has been written with erudition but for a large public. It deserves to be widely read.

According to his plan, Mr. Mackenzie has had to make some compromise between a topical and a chronological arrangement, and he has done this by isolating in each age its most important contribution to Parliamentary growth. Thus the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the feudal origins of Parliament, and the fourteenth the beginnings of the Commons' share in legislation. In the sixteenth century the majority of the liberties of the Commons were conceded, and in the seventeenth century the same Commons gained sole control of taxation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the theory of ministerial responsibility was worked out by stages, and at the same time the Commons were made more directly responsible to the will of the electorate. By a notable feat of compression all these large topics are here surveyed in considerable detail; and supplementary chapters are added on rules and records, on the office of the Speaker, on delegated legislation, and on the Second Chamber.

There was nothing inevitable about the growth of the English Parliament, nor was it consistent. Indeed there was always something haphazard about English Parliamentary development, and the institution which we know to-day is the product of a very hazardous history. When for instance, the Commons in the fourteenth century had discovered the value of the common petition and seemed on the way to a monopoly of

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legislation they surrendered the initiative without any great protest to the Crown. Similarly they owed their vaunted privileges at a later date as much to the Tudors as to themselves. Again, the principles of ministerial responsibility, and government by party, now the very basis of Parliamentary rule, were denounced by the most responsible of the great Parliamentary leaders of the eighteenth century. The modern view that a general election is necessary to validate new policies did not gain complete acceptance before 1886, whilst the tradition of the Speaker's neutrality is hardly a century old and owes more to the outstanding character of one or two holders of the office than to any general recognition in their time of its necessity. "It would almost seem" remarks Mr. Mackenzie "as if the Commons have made progress in spite of themselves".

What gives value to this book is its authority. As a clerk of the House of Commons Mr. Mackenzie writes from a position of vantage, and he has supplemented his experience with wide reading and sound judgment. There will be few who will not find something to learn from his chapters on "modernization of procedure", and his book throughout will be of value alike to students of history, and to those concerned with public affairs.

DAVID DOUGLAS.

A RUSSIAN GENIUS

PETER CARL FABERGÉ: *Goldsmith and Jeweller to the Russian Imperial Court and the principal Crowned Heads of Europe: An Illustrated Record and Review of his Life and Work*, A.D. 1846-1920. By Henry Charles Bainbridge. *B. T. Batsford Ltd.* Edition de luxe £14 14*s.* 0*d*; Library edition £7 7*s.* 0*d.*

THIS publication appears in two editions, both magnificent quarto volumes (11½ x 8¾ in.) illustrated with one hundred full-page plates, fourteen of which are in full colour: the one, an *edition de luxe*, is limited to two hundred and fifty copies printed on hand-made paper and bound in half-Niger morocco; the other, a Library edition on fine machine-made paper, is bound in crimson cloth with the Russian Imperial eagle in gold stamped on the upper side. These splendid volumes are dedicated by permission to H.M. Queen Mary.

Fabergé, goldsmith to two Czars, has been much discussed of late: the interest in his achievement has been revived, and the recent exhibition in Regent Street was its culmination. Doubtless the very excess of costliness in material and virtuosity in the making of Fabergé's masterpieces has a peculiar fascination at this time of shoddy manufacture and general ugliness of existence.

Here was a man who created countless *objets d'art* as magnificently as could be imagined; who made them for emperors, princes and noblemen, munificent as they were opulent: the materials—pure gold, jewelled with precious stones, enriched with enamels of loveliest hues; the subjects—everything: birds, beasts, and human figures, all in miniature; a little sedan-chair "in pink translucent enamel on gold . . . windows in rock-crystal engraved; inside furnishings in mother-of-pearl", etc., etc.; miniature chairs and cabinets, all rich as fancy could frame; and then, the "Easter Eggs" (so dear and important to the heart of Holy Russia), miracles of ingenuity, sumptuosity and craftsmanship, of every size, shape and colour. Such is the work of Fabergé, child of a Protestant family that came to Russia to escape from persecution in their native France, and who found in Russia fame and fortune.

Mr. Bainbridge knew Carl Fabergé well, worked with him, talked with him, represented him. This book is an intimate picture of its hero, and of the times in which he worked. Digressive and garrulous though the author always is, he has succeeded in creating a simulacrum of the man, Fabergé; moreover,

he presents him in a brilliant setting, like one of his own gems, rich, original, fantastic: this setting is the Russia that Mr. Bainbridge knew, the last phase of the Russia of the Romanoffs.

The picture explodes some popular beliefs regarding the Imperial House. We see the Romanoffs, not as hostile factions would have us see them, but as they were, austere in their lives, often to eccentricity, despite their splendour: "Peter (the Great) set the example by harnessing the whole family in disciplinary traces, and Nicholas II confirmed it by his simple way of life."

Mr. Bainbridge believes in Russia. Czars may go, and Soviets may come, and go too; but Russia will remain. Her destiny, though its ultimate fulfilment may be long delayed, cannot be diverted. This much I have distilled from many pages of prose, wherein, not seldom, digression dominates the argument.

The glory that was Fabergé concluded in ruin. In 1918 he fled to Switzerland. But the Revolution had killed him; he said: "This is life no more." At Lausanne in September, 1920, he died.

Taken as a whole, Mr. Bainbridge, and Messrs. Batsford, may justly be proud of this book. It is a monument to Fabergé and to Russian art such as no other author could have constructed, such as no publisher had hitherto attempted.

CHARLES RICHARD CAMMELL.

B.B.C. ETHICS

BROADCASTING AND SOCIETY. By Harman Grisewood. (Viewpoints No. 15). *S.C.M. Press Ltd. 2s. 6d.*

THE problem which faces a Corporation such as the B.B.C. is to preserve sufficient impartiality to allow a fair hearing of as many viewpoints as possible, while itself holding a definite world view. The world view of the B.B.C. is implicitly and unofficially Christian.

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How, then, is the problem to be approached? Mr. Harman Grisewood, Controller of the Third Programme, sets out to give an answer. Impartiality, he says, "requires creative energy and insight and not merely the powers to resist tendentiousness". He writes from the Christian standpoint; but he believes that there is much to be said for the best type of English liberal outlook, which, though not necessarily Christian, has preserved some of the best traditions of Christian humanism. Such an outlook, plus a genuine leaven of Christian belief, informs the B.B.C., and is responsible for the Corporation's persistent attempt at impartiality. Mr. Grisewood points out that one of the dangers of impartiality is syncretism: so many religions and philosophies are broadcast that the average unthinking listener is confirmed in his (very English) suspicion that they are all one happy family. He begins with a discussion of Christian society based upon the two great ideas of transcendence and the Incarnation, and passes on to the problem of unity and diversity in society. To-day, he says, "the unifying principle standardizes what should be diversified; the individualizing principle disintegrates what should be unified"; and one of the profound errors of our time is to confuse unity with uniformity. Broadcasting has to steer a way between the extremes of individualization and uniformity, and balance the personal and the social. Broadcasting, he insists, does not create: it is a "foster mother", and has the responsibilities of a foster mother, i.e., it gives an enormous circulation to what is already current. He believes that one of the great dangers is that the public should cease to care. The integrity of the B.B.C. derives as much from the public attitude towards it as from the Corporation itself. All this is true of the cultural side. But perhaps the B.B.C. is in danger of becoming too self-consciously cultural, and forgetting that the box on the sideboard is still, for most people, a toy to be used mainly as a source of harmless entertainment.

ROBERT HAMILTON.

MEAN THOUGH I AM . . .

THE PLEASURES OF POPE. Edited by Peter Quennell. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15*s.*

NEW LIGHT ON POPE. With some additions to his poetry hitherto unknown. By Norman Ault. *Methuen.* 30*s.*

IN the last hundred and fifty years, and especially in the last two decades, artists and poets have taken themselves much too seriously. From reading their works one might imagine that no one else had ever suffered from loneliness or unsatisfied ambition, while it has been forgotten or even denied that one essential of all art is the element of pleasure. Mr. Peter Quennell's new selection from Pope's poetry is very aptly entitled *The Pleasures of Pope*. It includes the *Essay on Criticism*, the *Essay on Man*, *The Rape of the Lock*, the *Imitations of Horace*, some of the *Moral Essays*, and a selection from the *Dunciad*, together with a number of shorter or less important poems. No better introduction to these classics could be recommended. It has all the essentials without being cluttered up with scholars' notes, and is prefaced by a short cogent essay of great merit.

So great was the unpopularity of the poetry of Pope after its fall from favour at the end of the eighteenth century, that even during our own time it has generally been the pastime of the connoisseur rather than of the general reader. The usual view remains that it is artificial, expresses ready-made sentiments, and lacks sincerity. Although Dr. Ault's new book shows the strongest enthusiasm for Pope, it will not, I think, do as much to correct this lack of interest in Pope's poetry as Dr. Edith Sitwell's fine study. His book is the result of much painstaking factual and deductive work done over a period of thirty or more years, but it does not show any new insight into poetic experience. Dr. Ault's main thesis is put by him in these words :

"Pope may begin to lose some of that diabolic malignity with which popular legend

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still reproaches him, and at the end of two centuries of misrepresentation come to be recognized as tolerably human after all."

It is in this, the very foundation of his book that the main weakness is to be found. No one to-day looks on Pope as a malignant or diabolical creature any more than he looks on the motor-car or the aeroplane as new. Dr. Ault whitewashes Pope with a good many coats of angel-white when a quick dusting would have been quite sufficient, and clears him of charges which no sane literary man would ever prefer against him to-day. But if the foundation appears unsound, it would be wrong to say that the considerable material on Pope gathered by Dr. Ault is anything but invaluable. After finishing this book one is bound to have a more vivid picture of the indefatigable little man, his sorrows, his angers, and his pranks, and a new desire to read the *Works* again.

To the unwary, however, one must give a word of warning. Dr. Ault's vigorous and meticulous whitewashing ends by making Pope into a charming fellow. This is going much too far. Pope, as well as his enemies, could be vindictive, and unlike his admirer Dr. Ault, he well knew it when he wrote in his *Universal Prayer* :

"Mean though I am, not wholly so."

PETER RUSSELL.

TWO VIEWS OF KNOWLEDGE

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE : AN INTRODUCTION. By A. D. Woozley. *Hutchinson.* 196 pp. 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE SKELETON KEY OF MATHEMATICS. By D. E. Littlewood. *Hutchinson.* 138 pp. 7*s.* 6*d.*

MOST people would be likely to say that there is a good deal in common between the mental outlook of the philosopher and the mathematician. But these two books, in Messrs. Hutchinson's *University Library*, go to prove that the differences between the two ways of looking at the universe and its problems are greater than the resemblances.

Mr. Woozley attempts to set out in terms understandable by the general reader (or the reader with only the barest of philosophical knowledge) the branch of philosophy known as the theory of knowledge—or, in more technical terms, epistemology. His book is, on the whole, successful, though it suffers to some extent from the fact that he has tried to do rather too much in small compass. He spends too much time, in fact, in telling his readers what the book is *not* about. Thus: "This book is not about Locke" (p. 34); "Hume involves himself in a number of confusions here, which, as we are only incidentally concerned with him, it is not our business to unravel" (p. 43). The trouble, in fact, about any popular book which attempts to make the more abstruse kind of philosophical theory understandable to the ordinary reader is that the author is compelled to take up much of his space in discussing the pros and cons of the theories advanced by other philosophers.

Mr. Littlewood has a great advantage here. Admittedly his discussion of the algebraic foundation of the higher mathematics (for that is what his book amounts to) must necessarily discuss the fundamental bases of, for example, Euclidean and Riemannian geometry. But in mathematics, as in most of the more rigid of sciences, there is an agreed basis of fact which is acceptable to all schools.

The trouble about interpreting philosophy is that this agreed basis does not exist. There is, therefore, the danger, either that the reader will be so confused that he cannot understand which of two alternative theories is true, or that he will be so taken in by a piece of special pleading that he will be totally unable to appreciate a contrary point of view that may be equally tenable with that advanced by the author.

The publishers of these books state that they are intended to be "popular yet scholarly

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introductions for the benefit of the general reader." This, to a large extent, they succeed in being. But they are not easy reading. Anyone without much knowledge of philosophy or mathematics might succeed in learning something from them; but he would find it hard going. And the meaning of some of the more highly technical passages would elude the lay reader altogether. Yet "popularization" of this kind, done by capable writers of respectable academic standing, must have value, if it is only the value of giving the reader some signpost on the way to further and deeper knowledge.

JOHN ROWLAND.

A POLITE ACCOMPLISHMENT

NO CAUSE FOR ALARM. By Virginia Cowles. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15*s.*

WE are led to suppose that the Victorian Miss was encouraged to have a smattering of knowledge about a great many things. To specialize in anything was not merely commercial but was also vulgar. Her activities would consist of a number of polite accomplishments.

In 1941, Miss Virginia Cowles came out with a book called *Looking for Trouble* in which were chronicled world-shattering events to the refined background of exclusive dinner parties, the discreet clatter of tea cups on the House of Commons terrace, and numerous incidents of the "Freddie and Sheila blew in for cocktails" type.

In her new book *No Cause for Alarm* Miss Cowles has remained true to type. Although it is apparently intended to portray English political life to the Americans, her book does not attempt to go deeply into the economics and philosophy of either the Socialists or the Conservatives. It was, perhaps, to have been expected that such a book should have been littered with minor inaccuracies but for Miss Cowles to maintain that the average industrial wage, in this country before the war, was £2 a week when in fact the average industrial earnings for men were £3 9s. a week, and even if you include women and boys £2 13s. a week, gives a clear indication of the source from which Miss Cowles has drawn what knowledge she has. When there is the smallest danger of profundity there is no cause for alarm for Miss Cowles hurriedly introduces a gossipy anecdote to relieve the feelings of her readers.

Miss Cowles is perhaps at her best when she describes nostalgically the gay social whirl of English society in the years immediately preceding the war. One feels that here indeed is her spiritual home, for then her book matches up to the exacting standards of a social column in a society magazine. The weakness of *No Cause for Alarm* is that Miss Cowles, writing from her window in Vanity Fair, presents a highly privileged view of English life to her American readers, to whom it is primarily addressed.

Miss Cowles claims the aquaintance of Mr. Oliver Lyttleton, one of the wittiest men in England. She quotes his favourite maxim "never do anything in the name of pleasure that bores you". One is permitted to speculate as to the number of people who will excuse themselves from reading her book on these very grounds.

HUMPHREY BERKELEY.

A SIDELIGHT

BYRON, HOBHOUSE, AND FOSCOLO. By E. R. Vincent. *Cambridge University Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

BYRON'S talent for social intrigue from which we to-day derive almost as much entertainment as he did, and which his friends found less diverting, was often infectious. A susceptibility to scandal seems curiously to have been transmitted to people connected with him, even at second-hand.

In the involved story of a literary alliance between Hobhouse and an Italian poet, Foscolo, Byron appears but momentarily; this *History of a Collaboration* is, however, a tale of conspiracy in the true Byronic fashion.

The correspondence over a period of some six years between Hobhouse and Foscolo, fortified by extracts from Hobhouse's journal, and admirably unfolded by Mr. Vincent's text, shows how the friendship began on a basis of mutual assistance: Hobhouse, who was preparing his notes on Canto IV of *Childe Harold*, required an informed outline of contemporaneous Italian literature, a sound knowledge of which neither he nor Byron possessed. Foscolo needed money.

Trouble started when the notes were published, including an unacknowledged essay by Foscolo. The Italian literati were quick to recognize their exile countryman's hand in the Hobhouse notes, and quicker to take offence at some of his opinions. Byron, when appealed to, was even more speedy in washing his lordly hands of the whole affair, notes and all. Meanwhile Foscolo was pressing Hobhouse for increased payments, half-threatening to reveal his identity as author; Hobhouse called his bluff; Foscolo retreated in panic. New commitments arose between the two, and further complications followed, from which Hobhouse emerges finally in a somewhat priggish light and Foscolo as a sad, fallible and eminently likeable figure.

The introduction of the unfamiliar Italian poet is one of the most attractive aspects of this book which is further adorned by Foscolo's engaging letters, printed exactly as he wrote them, in his self-styled "francese barocco". If it is true that, as Mr. Vincent suggests, Foscolo was a classical spirit, he appears in this context as romantic a personality as it would be anyone's destiny to meet.

MURIEL SPARK.

GEORGE ORWELL

IT is difficult to convey in words the curious charm, or better, loveableness, of George Orwell. He was tall and lean, like Don Quixote; when he laughed, it was an inward, dry chuckle, and he was endlessly concerned with the disproportion between human aspiration and performance in all its manifestations. More often than not he had with him some petition or other, for which he would solicit the most unlikely signatures; any ostensibly humanitarian cause, however bizarre, claimed his support. His friends and acquaintances were as varied as his interests, and he had a way of assembling them quite indiscriminately, sometimes with odd effects. His voice was harsh and throaty, and yet not monotonous.

There were two distinct sides to his nature which never wholly became fused—an intense, and almost boyish, romanticism which made him a great Kipling lover, and a dry despair which led him to consider Gissing the greatest of modern novelists. The same division was apparent in his politics. He continued to belong, generically, to the Left, while belabouring, with increasing zest, much that was Leftist. Contemporary trends were, for the most part, repugnant to him, and yet he felt bound, in his capacity as a citizen, to encourage them. The Soviet regime he increasingly loathed, and in his enchanting allegory, "Animal Farm",—the best since "Gulliver's Travels"—produced a wonderful image of the fallacy of revolution which is the more telling because gentle and imaginative, without any trace of righteous indignation. The famous slogan, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others",

exquisitely parodies all such humbug. By the same token, "All shares are fair, but some shares are fairer than others". There are also the oddly moving lines:

"Rings shall vanish from our noses,
And the harness from our back,
Bit and spur shall rust forever,
Cruel whips no more shall crack."

I suggested to him once that at the end, when the animals have started going on two legs, a drove of fellow-travellers, the Dean of Canterbury, *New Statesman* contributors, and others, should come in on all-fours, but he thought this would be unkind.

To be bedridden, as he was for the last two years of his life, was to him a particular deprivation. He loved the country and country pursuits, especially fishing. All animals—except, perhaps, Man—delighted him; and some of the most sombre passages in his last novel, "Nineteen Eighty-four," are mitigated by a sense that the earth remains dear however terrible may be the doom worked out in human destiny. His walk was brisk, with long strides, whether along the Strand, or in the Island of Jura, where he had a house. He took pride in rolling his own cigarettes, and liked to fancy himself adept in practical matters. Unkindness of any sort was wholly alien to his nature; and he never was able to habituate himself to Man's individual and collective indulgence in cruelty, particularly evident in his own times. As an invalid he was uncomplaining, but he deeply longed to be well again, and to write—this, latterly, being too much for him. He had much suffering, and bore it with fortitude. The ravages which his disease made were only too obvious, but he refused to be downcast; he continued to delight in the company of his friends, and made plans for the future up to the last.

It had been decided, just before he died, that he should go to a sanatorium in Switzerland; and though he had a passionate preference for England, which his extensive travels had only intensified, he was looking forward to seeing mountains and sunshine. His fishing rod was by his bed, and, characteristically, he was insistent that it should be packed, even though in the neighbourhood of the sanatorium he was going to there were, he learnt, no streams to fish. Alas, the journey was not to be. He breathed his last in the wintry mists of London.

His early novels are unlikely to be read hereafter; but in "Animal Farm" he has made one of the few enduring contributions of this time to English literature, and "Nineteen Eighty-four", with all its macabre, and sometimes somewhat unreal, horror, conveys, as no other writings in this genre have, the full spiritual consequences of materialist collectivism. As Mr. Koestler has justly written, he "was the only writer of genius among the litterateurs of social revolt between the two wars". He had, besides, a sweetness of disposition and essential honesty of purpose which will assuredly live on in the memories of those who knew him.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE.

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